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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 23, 2017
1st Sunday after Easter

Scripture Lessons: 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31
Hymns: 210; 190; 188; 189; (187)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ... "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.²⁵ For David says concerning Him:

'I foresaw the Lord always before my face,

For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;

Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

²⁷ For You will not leave my soul in Hades,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;

You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

²⁹ "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹ he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see

corruption. ³²This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, Who died for us and rose again, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Resurrection, a Unique teaching of Christianity --

We are told by the theologians and philosophers of this world that all religions lead to the same destination; they simply have different highways to get people there. They claim that we all believe in the same god, we just call him by different names. They might also claim that we all have the same hope of glory, we just think of it a little differently eternal bless and glory, or Nirvana, there's no real difference. Nothing could be further from the truth! There are a number of teachings of Christianity that set the Christian faith apart from the religions of this world. It starts with a true and personal God who is not part of the universe, but the Creator of the universe. It continues with the total corruption of man. *"I know that in me (that is in my flesh) nothing good dwells"* (Romans 7:18). This true religion continues by directing us not to our merit or works for salvation, but to the merits of Jesus Christ alone. It ultimately reveals for us the hope of resurrection, not reincarnation or other spirit myths of afterlife.

On this Sunday after Easter the Holy Spirit leads us to a greater appreciation of --

THEME: The Christian's Hope of Resurrection.

This hope finds its Source in Jesus' resurrection and the fact that --

I. Christ, Our Crucified Savior, Could not be Held by Death.

This truth lay at the heart of Peter's sermon that day. We read in opening verses of our text:

Acts 2:22-24 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Peter states boldly that God made it clear that Jesus is the Christ! All the signs were there for the people to see. Jesus performed all the miracles and wonders and signs that were foretold by the prophets. The deaf were made to hear, the blind to see, the lame to walk, and even the dead were raised to life again. Jesus miraculously fed the 5000, and then not long after He fed the four thousand with but seven loaves and a few small fish. And notably, the people heard Him teach and marveled, for Jesus taught them as one having authority. And He did possess authority. He possessed the authority to forgive sins, because Jesus is the Son of God. He possessed authority so that even the wind and the waves obeyed Him.

And yet He came down to earth not “*to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many*” (Mathew 20:28). As the Son of Man, (for He was and is also fully true man) Jesus became that sacrifice needed to pay for the sins of the world. That was according to the “*determined purpose and foreknowledge of God.*” God allowed Jesus to be taken by “*lawless hands*” to be “*crucified, and put to death.*” Yes, God’s purpose and plan for our redemption was fulfilled when wicked men crucified Jesus.

Peter made it clear that this did not excuse any of the Jews from culpability in Jesus’ death. “**You** have taken (Him) by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.” (v.23). The people of the Jews had rejected Jesus as the Christ. He had not fit their model of what the Messiah should be, a political leader to liberate them from Rome, or make this life easy. Out of jealousy their leaders worked to turn the crowds against Him, demanding that Jesus be crucified. Many of them thought that would be the end of Jesus. But God would not let it end that way.

God raised Him from the dead. It was impossible for death to hold Him. This doesn't mean that Jesus wasn't really dead. Oh, He was dead. The Roman soldier made sure of that by thrusting his spear right into Jesus' heart. It was clear to all present that Jesus was dead. More than that, it was clear to all present that when Jesus died the Son of God died. It was made clear by those mighty signs that Jesus' death made a deep impression upon the whole of creation, as well as before God in heaven. Because of the effect that this death had upon God in heaven above, **it was outside of the realms of possibility that death should hold Jesus in its grasp.**

The resurrection of Christ was not a new teaching that first appeared after Jesus' crucifixion. It all happened as God had planned and foretold.

II. In Jesus' Resurrection the Scriptures Were Fulfilled.

One of the Old Testament Scriptures that addresses Jesus' resurrection is found in our text.

Acts 2:25-31 "For David says concerning Him (that is Jesus):

'I foresaw the Lord always before my face,

For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;

Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

²⁷ For You will not leave my soul in Hades,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;

You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

²⁹ "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹ he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

The psalm that Peter quotes was written by David. In David's role as a prophet he presents to us the words, the thoughts, the hope of our Savior as He went forward to die on the cross. Jesus knew what lay before Him. Jesus repeatedly taught "*His disciples that He must*

go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”

(Matthew 16:21). Jesus lived in hope of His own resurrection, a hope He drew from the Scriptures. And these scriptures were fulfilled when on the third day God raised Jesus from the dead.

Jesus was not abandoned by God in the grave. Jesus endured being forsaken by God when He suffered upon the cross. It was there upon the cross that God turned away from Jesus because Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree. When Jesus' suffering upon the cross came to its conclusion Jesus was able to declare before His death, "*It is finished.*" He had endured the curse of God and in His death Jesus entrusted His spirit into the Father's hands as Jesus bowed His head in death.

God was satisfied; our debt of sin was paid in full. Jesus had endured the fullest measure of the curse of sin and so it was not possible, it was **just not possible** for God to abandon Jesus to the grave. He would not allow His Holy One to see corruption!

In Jesus' resurrection –

III. We Are Given the Assurance of Resurrection.

That bold statement of testimony that ends our text is the best news we could ever receive.

Acts 2:32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses."

What we have is an historical fact substantiated by many witnesses. Peter and the rest of the Apostles are only the beginning of those who saw Jesus, touched Jesus, ate with Jesus, were once again instructed by Jesus in the truth of the gospel now fulfilled by Jesus' death and resurrection. Then they were commissioned by Jesus to take this marvelous message of everlasting life out into the world. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the greatest event in all of history, for it establishes Jesus as the chief cornerstone of our faith and of His Church.

Jesus' resurrection is but the first of many resurrections to glory. We are told that Jesus is the first fruits, the first and the best of all

that is coming, but first fruits means that there are more coming. Those whose resurrections to glory are still coming God has known from eternity. Jesus' resurrection seals the deal for their resurrection to eternal glory. **Eternal glory!** Paul wrote to the Romans:

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

That many brethren will rise to everlasting glory is founded upon the glorious resurrection of Jesus on that Sunday after His crucifixion. The reality of that resurrection makes all our hopes a true and living reality awaiting us in heaven. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 "But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming."

Jesus taught all these marvelous truths for the disciples, and they are recorded that we may know and believe the truth about Jesus and the wondrous grace that comes to us in the resurrection. All that Jesus taught has been shown to be true by His resurrection. All that Jesus promised for us is **rock solid truth** for our comfort and assurance.

Jesus said, "*Because I live, you will live also.*" (John 14:19).

Jesus lives. He rose from the grave on that third day! God's Holy One did not see corruption! Conclusion for us: "You will live also! Rock solid truth!

Jesus said: "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.* ²⁶ *And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*" (John 11:25). That wasn't wishful thinking or empty platitudes offered to a grieving Martha. It was rock solid truth proven to be forever true by Jesus' resurrection on Easter morning. It speaks to us of the life we now have in Jesus, an

eternal life that overwhelms the grave and destroys its power to hold us. We have that eternal life now in Jesus, and we shall rise from the grave and live with Him forever. That is our comfort because we confess that *“I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!* (Job 19:25-27).

Some in this world might scoff: “How can you know that? Nobody can know that!” I know it, and you know it by the assurance of faith. We have not seen Jesus. We have not touched Jesus. We have not heard His voice, but we **know that our Redeemer Lives!** We know because of the gracious working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. It is as Jesus explained to Thomas: *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* (John 20:29). Indeed how blessed we are who have not seen and yet have believed!

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)