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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 8, 2018
1st Sunday after Easter

Scripture Lessons: 1 John 5:1-6, John 20:19-31

Hymns: 188; 196; 201; 205:2 (730)

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

Sermon Text: Acts 3:12-20

¹² So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ “Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

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

In Christ Jesus, our Risen Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Impact

Sometimes things are done for impact. Impact means that certain actions are supposed to change the status quo. Sometimes there may be changes to the status quo that one might not find desirable but it has been determined that the actions are necessary, and that hopefully, in the long run, things will be better. In other words sometimes certain actions bring a certain amount of pain with them, but overall the plan is for things to improve. We have been hearing this kind of discussion going on in the press recently with the tariffs that the administration is proposing. There is not so much a concern that the tariffs will have an impact, but whether it will be a negative or positive impact. All agree that there will be an impact upon the lives of Americans.

That is really trivial compared to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Even if the world gives little notice to Jesus' resurrection, or fails to comprehend its significance, the **impact** of Jesus' resurrection is real. The question is: "Is it real for you in your heart and in your life?" Are you benefitting from the impact of Jesus' resurrection?

Easter Sunday was a week ago, and we gathered to sing our hallelujahs and rejoice together at the great news that our crucified Savior was no longer in the tomb, but had risen, and lives forevermore. Now it's seven days after our Easter observance, and a couple of millennia since Jesus' resurrection. Is it just history, an anniversary holiday we observe like the Fourth of July, or has Jesus' resurrection made an impression, an impact in your heart, in your life? Let us then, on the basis of Holy Scripture consider --

THEME: Resurrection Impact!

Let us remember --

I. Jesus as the Prince of Life.

Our text is a portion of a sermon Peter preached in the temple courts following the miracle of healing a lame beggar that sat at one of the temple gates begging alms. That caught people's

attention for the man sat there often and was well known by the people, and now they saw him not just standing but walking, even leaping, and singing praise to God! Of course the people were amazed by the miracle that had been performed when Peter said: *“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”* (Acts 3:6)

When Peter saw the people’s reaction to this miracle he was quick to direct attention away from himself and John, and gave glory to God.

Acts 3:13-15 “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.”

Please notice that the apostles were not starting some new religion after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This was and is the same religion, worshiping the same God who from the fall into sin promised to send a Savior into the world. God made those promises to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, assuring each of them that in their *“Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed.”* (Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14) This Promised Seed, this Servant of the Lord was Jesus.

Peter hit his audience with the hard facts of reality. In spite of Pilate’s efforts the Jews had insisted that Jesus be crucified and that the murderer Barabbas be set free. In doing this they killed the Prince of life! Yes, Peter was declaring to the people the fact that in killing Jesus they had killed the Creator and the Ruler of all life. They had killed the Son of God!

They had killed God when they killed Jesus, but God raised Jesus from the dead, and Peter along with many others were witnesses of this fact.

Now IMPACT. Yes, this made a deep impact on Peter’s audience. It was meant to do just that. They needed to be convicted of their sin. There wasn’t anyone there who didn’t know about the manner

of Jesus' death. For that matter the rumors of His resurrection were also widespread, and so were the lies that the body had simply been stolen while the guards slept. This miracle made it clear that Jesus Lives! More than that; **Jesus is God!** More than that, **they had killed the Prince of Life!** Guilt was upon them!

What about us? Is there any similar impact upon us, or are we to stand and point our fingers at the Jews assembled in the temple court? In one of our Lenten hymns we sing, "**Was it for crimes that I had done He groaned upon the tree?**" And we know the answer to be affirmative, and in that affirmation of guilt we also must understand that since Jesus' death was necessary also because of my sin, I also share in that responsibility for the Lord's death. "**He was delivered up because of our offences.**" (Romans 4:25)

But let us not fail to comprehend the impact of Jesus being the Prince of Life who died and rose again! If He were but a mortal man, or as some might propose that Jesus died only according to His human nature, and God did not die, then you are still in your sins. It was the precious nature of Jesus' divine blood that atoned for our sins. It was the infinite value of Jesus' holy life as the Son of God who came to earth as the Servant of the Lord that has been credited to us as righteousness. And then we know the impact of the resurrection. "**He was raised again because of our justification.**" (Romans 4:25) The Son of God died because of our sin, and this Jesus God raised to life again that we might have life **in His name.**

Consider --

II. The Power of Jesus' Name.

Peter drew attention to that very wonder of the power of Jesus' name.

Acts 3:16 "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

It was in Jesus' name that this man's legs were made strong. Of course Jesus' name is not simply a magical incantation. To truly

call upon the name of Jesus one must have faith in Jesus, that is, one knows Jesus to be our Lord and Savior who died for us and for our salvation. When one calls upon Jesus' name in faith wonders happen. One does not call upon His name in vain. So on that day in Jerusalem the lame man was made strong. But I believe something far greater happened there, far greater indeed, beginning with that lame man. Not only were his legs made strong, but Peter says he was given perfect soundness. Perfect in the sense of complete soundness. Don't stop at the man's legs, but consider also his heart and the praise that left his lips in the hearing of so many.

The more visible impact of our Risen Savior was certainly in the healing of the lame man's legs, but the greater impact is that which takes place in the heart. It is in the name of Jesus, by faith in His name that hearts are healed, more than that, dead hearts are given life. This is an impact that brings joy and rejoicing to all who believe. Jesus comes to us with healing in His wings. Jesus comes to us and frees us from sin's curse. Jesus comes to us and brings us peace, the peace of sins forgiven, the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. It is in connection with Jesus' name that we also have been given new life, spiritual life now, and the sure and certain hope of everlasting life for both soul and body at the resurrection on the Last Day. That my friends, is a powerful impact, a lasting impact, an eternal impact that is only real because this Jesus, the Prince of Life died for us and rose again. WE have life in His name.

Now life starts now. Peter makes the connection with a --

III. Resurrection Call to Repentance.

Acts 3:17-20 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. ¹⁸But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before."

Peter is not making an excuse for their sin that they and their rulers had acted in the ignorance of unbelief. The guilt of sin is still present with those who are ignorant, and that sin still brings death.

Peter is making a distinction between what went on in their lives before, and what should be seen in their lives going forward. Yes, without faith it is impossible to please God, (Hebrews 11:6) for without faith in Jesus one cannot love others in the name of Jesus and for the love of Jesus. Now that they had witnessed the power of the resurrection, and witnessed the impact, indeed felt the impact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it was time for that impact to be evident in their hearts and lives.

Peter called for them to repent and be converted. Putting those two words together makes a very clear presentation of the true impact of the gospel of a crucified and risen Savior upon one's heart and life. To repent is to change one's way of thinking. It is a completely new way of thinking about righteousness and life. It calls for the rejection of rationalizations for sin, and hedging of behaviors that our sins are not as bad as others, and seeking one's own justification in such rationalizations. It calls for the rejection of any merit or worthiness on our part. It calls for the realization that any sin, all my sin makes me worthy of eternal punishment. This new way of thinking looks for my redemption, and hope of salvation only in Jesus' merit, both in His holy, sinless life, and in His innocent sufferings and death. Faith looks to Jesus' resurrection as a sure sign of my own resurrection.

Peter said, "Repent and be *converted*." Conversion indicates that one needs to walk in a new direction, in a completely new and opposite direction. One no longer should walk in the ways of the world, but in newness of life. One no longer looks for personal fulfillment in this life, but in that life which is to come. One walks looking for that great day of our Lord Jesus Christ who at His coming shall change our vile bodies that they might be fashioned like His own glorious body. Faith does not lead one to live in sin and in the fulfillment of the lusts of the flesh. **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.** (Romans 12:2) For you to *prove* the will of God is a demonstration in your life of this truth of the gospel. You are to demonstrate by how you live that this is the way things really are. Children of God are here on this earth to make the truth of Christ and His death and resurrection visible to others just as clearly as the lame man walking and leaping and praising God.

When we know the power of Jesus' name as our Risen Savior then we also will be conformed to the image of His Son. This is the impact of God's grace and power in our hearts. Then we also shall turn away from every sin in our lives. We will make no provision, NO provision for the lusts of the flesh, "For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:16-17) We will "proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9) in all we say and do.

So here we are seven days after Easter. Do we still live in Easter joy? Do we appreciate the wonder of a Risen Savior? Do our hallelujahs still rise to heaven? May the Spirit of our God impress upon our hearts the true and eternal impact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in our heart and in our lives!

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.