

Unleashed

- It's Easter! Today is about celebrating the fact that Jesus rose from the grave! On the 3rd day, Jesus rose from the grave! Jesus was RESURRECTED! Let me hear you say RESURRECTION! (ok, that may be going a bit far, but getting pumped up...Brent!)
- The Resurrection is the assurance that God is GREATER than anything we may face, even death itself.

Tension: As we'll see in the Scripture passage for today, Jewish leadership tried to conceal the TRUTH of the Resurrection and control that which cannot be controlled! Silly Pharisees. You can't keep a good man down! Ever since Adam and Eve took a bite of the forbidden fruit, the Human Tendency has been to Conceal & Control; but there are some things that can't be concealed or controlled!

Matthew 27:57-61

- Joseph of Arimathea
 - Disciple of Jesus (Gospel of John says 'secret')
 - Part of the Sanhedrin, group of 70 something guys that ruled the temple; part of the group that decided Jesus had to go...
 - Assume he was a 'secret Disciple' out of Fear of Jewish leaders
 - Joseph's outward support of Jesus would have cost him immensely, more than financial but also social impact, reputation and family
 - The Death of Jesus was the catalyst that shifted everything to overcome his fear and bring his devotion into the light
 - The Death of Jesus brought the love Joseph had for His Savior to the forefront of life, and His love became unconcealed and unleashed, as made known through some courageous actions on the part of Joseph
 - The fear, and financial and social ramifications, became of little consequence to Joseph when compared to his love and devotion for Jesus, and Joseph chose to honor Jesus by caring for him in death, though he may have felt he failed Jesus in life
 - Joseph's devotion for Jesus goes from 'secret' to public
 - Joseph goes to Pilate, the one who ordered Jesus' crucifixion, and asks for Jesus' body...people had to ask themselves, "Why would Joseph do that?"
 - According to the Gospel of Mark: Joseph was actually the one who took down the body of Jesus from the cross; we can only imagine what a sobering and heartbreaking experience

Matthew 27:62-64

- Chief priests, Ananias and Caiaphas, The top dogs of the Sanhedrin (CEO's)
 - Those with the most to lose
- Call Jesus 'that deceiver'
- 1st deception= he was the messiah
- Last deception= He Lives; resurrection
- There is a deceiver but it's not Jesus
 - No One desires the Gospel to be concealed and bridled more than the enemy

Matthew 27:65

- Religious and political rulers doing all they could do to prevent a 'false' testimony of resurrection
 - The Jewish leaders were desperate to conceal and control the Truth
 - Why? Fear of losing control; they had yet to realize that their 'control' was nothing but an illusion/fantasy
 - You can seal the tomb all day long; make a barricade, post a battalion of angry she-bears whose cubs had just been stolen in front of the rock - NOTHING (say Nothing) was going to get in the way of God's love and power being unconcealed and unleashed upon the world through the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ

Matthew 28:1-8

- Violent earthquake
 - Dunamis ; Alarming
 - The heavenly realm breaking into the natural
- Gospel of Luke “Why do you look for the living among the dead”
- Evidence
- The women saw him laid in there (all four gospel accounts) and now he is not there
- Afraid, but Filled with joy

Matthew 28:9

- “Clasped” his feet; evidence of Jesus’ bodily resurrection - Jesus was a ghost or some spirit; Jesus was Revealed in the flesh
- Professor Luke Timothy Johnson: “Jesus did not avoid death. He didn’t get really sick and then get better. Jesus’ resurrection was not a hallucination. Jesus doesn’t ‘live on’ merely as a moral example or through his teaching. Jesus was not resuscitated, nor did he have a ‘near death’ experience and come back to life as though death was not thwarted or deferred. Jesus died. Was dead: D-E-A-D. Void of life. Jesus was dead and buried.
 - “Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again His body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature.” [Quoting the Discipline here, Bible reference?]

Matthew 28:10

- Further evidence, empty tomb vs. resurrected Jesus
 - Greater testimony/witness/revelation
 - Often how it is with us and how the Truth becomes revealed / unconcealed - little by little, walls are lowered; lies are replaced and erased; evidence mounts; grace takes hold; the Truth becomes evident

Resurrection = HOPE! Anybody need some hope this morning? We can live without just about anything, but we can't live without hope; we need it. We need it because life gets hard:

There are a lot of things in life that can push us to the limit, cause us to struggle and bring us to our knees:

- Challenges at work; yucky boss. Back-stabbing, lack of integrity
- Family not getting along; bickering, fighting, tension
- Breaking up a boyfriend or girlfriend, disharmony with spouse
- ‘Mean girls’
- A tough diagnosis
- Illness, depression
- Financial hardship
- Losing someone you love
- broken relationship with your kids and grandkids
- broken relationship with your parents
- Losing control of your temper and emotions
- Lack of surrender and Failing to be obedient to the Lord
- Lack of purity
- Unforgiveness, bitterness and resentment

To me, the hope of the resurrection speaks to the constancy of Christ’s presence in our lives, even in the midst of what may feel like the most catastrophic and ruinous event. We are never alone. Hope is not in vain; God loves us; Jesus’ descent from the Cross and Resurrection makes this reality known. Resurrection means the worst thing that happens to you won’t be the last thing. God does some of Gods work when all seems lost. Just ask the Disciples.

Matthew 28:11-15

- The Chief Priests and Elders go to great lengths 'To Keep a lid on it'; To conceal the evidence, to deceive, to keep people from knowing the Truth of the Resurrection
- The People of the world/enemy still trying to say Resurrection didn't happen
 - We know it's true; Jesus Rose, Jesus lives
 - How keep resonating if not true?
- **1 Corinthians 15:1-8**
 - Appeared to over 500
 - Billions of believers since have had the Holy Spirit reveal the living Jesus to them

He still appears today, through the Holy Spirit he is unleashed, The son reveals the Father

Matthew 28:16-17

- 'Some doubted'
 - Lean into some may be here doubting - but it's true, Jesus died
 - Doubt is often part of the journey...

Matthew 28:18

- Authority
 - Over disease/sickness, demons/spirits/bondage

Matthew 28:19-20

- How did the Disciples make Disciples?
 - They told the Truth; how Jesus changed their lives; that He lives
- Unleashed on the World= disciples
- Once the Truth is unleashed in us, we are tasked with unleashing the Truth in the world
 - Not secret/keep the lid on it (so Chris will shut up) show the No Regrets tattoo
 - This kind of discipleship is not a secretive type of discipleship (Joseph, Nicodemus)
- We tell Our Truth of how Jesus has met us in our need and made a way for us; nobody can argue our Truth as we know it and have experienced
- Resurrection
 - People fought so hard to keep a lid on it, they couldn't keep the truth of the resurrection concealed, so maybe it's true - so what?
 - Reason= HOPE
 - Happened for you; the Purpose was You