

“He Lives!” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Easter Sunday – April 9, 2023

- I. **Matthew 28:5-6** – ⁵But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for He has risen”
- II. **Who is Jesus?**
 - a. Yesterday, we were watching The Chosen series about Jesus – and we are in season 3, so I won’t give any surprises away for those of you who haven’t watched it...
 - i. This episode reminded us of Jesus returning to His hometown of Nazareth, where He claimed to be the Messiah, or the one who was anointed to be the Savior of humanity.
 - ii. Not many people agreed with His claims that day – and in fact, they took Him to a cliff to stone Him and throw Him off for blasphemy.
 - b. Yet, the question still stands... even 2000 years later – Who is Jesus?
 - c. For many people, Jesus is like anything else in the world – you like it or you don’t... you believe and that’s your truth, but not necessarily my truth.
 - i. I read an illustration from Josh and Sean McDowell’s book, “The Resurrection and You” – as he held up two jars – marbles and Starburst candy in assorted flavors.
 1. He asked how many marbles were in the jar – which was an objective fact – when they were counted, that was true
 2. He then asked which flavor is best of the Starbursts – which was a subjective choice – it depended on each person.
 3. When it comes to the resurrection and who Jesus is... it either happened or it didn’t – and it’s not about my truth and your truth
 - d. Faith comes by hearing the objective truth – that Jesus is God – that He is the Savior, who came in the flesh to save us all...
 - i. I know that might seem like a bold claim to some, and that’s okay, because several times throughout the Bible, when Jesus Himself made that claim, He was almost put to death by stoning!
 - ii. It’s a bold claim, isn’t it? Jesus is God, and Jesus is our Savior.
 - iii. Either Jesus is NOT an objective, historical figure who rose from the dead, or He really did come into this world, live, die and rise again.
 - e. Now some people will say – “I don’t agree with a bunch of stuff in the Bible”
 - i. And maybe you don’t agree to what the Bible says about money, or sex, or right living – but does that change who Jesus is?
 - ii. Jesus still died and rose again whether you like what the Bible says or not.
 - f. Other people say – “I don’t like church or religion – they’re hypocrites”
 - i. And that is true, because church people are sinners who are very imperfect, and so are pastors and congregations...
 1. But does that change who Jesus is?

- g. So, what some people are saying is that because they don't like what's in the Bible, or they haven't had good experiences with church or Christians, then Jesus could not have existed, died, and risen from the dead.
 - h. I'm here to tell the story of the true Savior who rose again, and He lives!
- III. **Early on a Sunday morning**, some women went to take care of a body.
- a. Jesus' death on Friday was horrifying – He had been tortured and beaten within an inch of His life... forced to carry His cross to the site of His execution and nailed to the wood without mercy.
 - b. As He gave up His life – even the most unbelieving and hard-hearted people saw that He truly was the Savior – when not only did the weather change but the earth shook, boulders split in two, and tombs opened with living people coming out... but nothing more could be done – so they put His body in a tomb.
 - c. And now on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to Jesus' tomb to weep, to place some fragrant spices to overcome the smell of death...and to remember their Lord and Savior who died.
 - d. What they encountered was another earthquake as the huge stone was moved, and an angel telling them not to be afraid... the dead body they were seeking is not there – He is risen! **He is risen indeed, alleluia!**
 - e. Can you imagine the joy and elation in those women, all the people who were just devastated over the death of their Savior? He lives!!
 - f. As Jesus rose from the dead on that first Easter morning, God's rescue plan was complete – at least when it comes to paying for the sins of humanity through His death... and handing out a not guilty verdict to all those who have faith... by His resurrection.
- IV. **Sometimes the story gets told with fancy words and difficult ideas.**
- a. In simple terms, Adam and Eve sinned against God – opening the door for sin and evil to go everywhere – even into every person... and we don't have to look far to see the sin and evil that comes out of people.
 - b. Not one of us could get away from that sin sickness, because it came to us the moment we were conceived...
 - c. But God loves us... Even knowing we have no good in us on our own, God the Father sent Jesus to buy us back from punishment we deserve... hell.
 - d. Jesus paid for our sins by His blood... not with cash or gold... but by His blood He calls us forgiven.
 - e. So, how do you receive this free gift of forgiveness?
- V. **Who is Jesus?**
- a. It all goes back to Jesus Christ, and if you believe that He was truly man and truly God, sent to die and rise again for you.
 - b. If you have faith that Jesus is your Savior, you are forgiven.

- c. Some would say, “yeah, but you have to be good and do good stuff or you can’t be forgiven” – and to that Jesus says that we are all dead in our sin, but He calls us “not guilty” by what He has done...
 - i. That is grace... receiving what we don’t deserve...
 - ii. There is no good you can do to receive it, because God does the work, and God does the choosing.
- d. Have you ever been in one of those awful lines in P.E., where the teacher lets two kids pick out their teams?
 - i. The best get picked, and the ones at the end are standing there, knowing they don’t belong because they aren’t good enough.
 - ii. Jesus comes up to that person, puts His arms around them and says, “I choose you.... I died and rose again for you... I forgive you.”
- e. God doesn’t need you to measure up for Him to love you – He already proved how much He loves you by sending His Son to save you.
- f. Who is Jesus?
 - i. Jesus is our Savior... true God and true Man... and “everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.” (Acts 10:43)
 - ii. Amen.