

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 4 April 2021

Sermon Title : Why

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Mark 16:1-8

INTRODUCTION

Believers today adopt different traditions of celebration and worship on Easter Sunday because we are joyous that Jesus has risen from the dead on Resurrection Sunday. However, 2000 years ago, after Jesus hung on the cross and died on Good Friday, there was no celebration feast or preparations made to welcome Jesus' return to life in the following days. In fact, after Jesus' death on the cross on Friday, there were no more activities for His disciples and so that Saturday was also known as 'Silent Saturday'. No one expected the resurrection of Jesus. Why then did Jesus rise from the dead? Jesus did not rise from the dead just to give us a "happy ending" to a sad story.

Resurrection of Christ is "most important" to our Christian faith

Paul the apostle traditionally known to be the author of 13 New Testament books out of the 27, provides the reason for why Jesus was resurrected in 1 Corinthians 15. First, he states that, "I passed on to you what was most important. And what had also been passed on to me." (v.3a) Next, he explains what the "most important" thing is, that "Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said." (vv.3b-4)

- Jesus' resurrection is not just to provide a happy ending but it is in fact the most important. And is therefore the foundation for everything that we hold on and believe in Christianity.

Jesus' resurrection is of primary importance in the gospel because this gives meaning to everything else that Christians talk about, teach about, sing about and preach about.

Paul then proceeds to reinforce this by saying, "And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless." (v.14) Hence, if Christ had not risen from the dead, our faith would be in vain and Jesus' teachings would merely be seen as wise teachings that guide us to lead a moral and well intentioned life.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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Why Jesus rose from the dead:

1. Jesus rose from the dead to ensure that we will be counted justified

“And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins.” (1 Corinthians 15:17)

“He was delivered over because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification.” (Romans 4:25)

- None of us can settle the debt of our sin whether big or small (e.g. murder = harboured anger, adultery = lustful eyes) and we require a sinless Saviour to settle this debt for us.
- Jesus satisfied our Holy God's requirement of punishment for our sin by His death on the cross. When He had settled our debt, He was resurrected and walked out of death, justified.
- The moment He was raised, we can say too that our debt had been paid. God no longer requires us to pay the punishment for our sin as Christ has risen.

Knowing this reality changes the way we relate to God our Father:

- When we sin, we do not need to fear the God of holiness who is our Judge and also a God of wrath when sin is concerned.
- Instead of falling for the temptation and deception that we must run away from God when we sin, we can approach God freely to confess and repent of our sin and humbly receive His forgiveness through Jesus.
- God has provided Jesus as the payment for our sin so we can have a relationship with Him, so that when we do wrong, we can work on that relationship for God to mould us into Christ's likeness.

Because Christ is risen, there is now no more condemnation (Romans 8:1) and we can approach the throne of grace boldly and confidently (Hebrews 4:16)

2. Jesus rose from the dead to ensure that we understand, know and live in the truth of hope

We have a sure and certain hope in Christ because He has been raised from the dead. This hope comes from 1 Corinthians 15:20 which states, “But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.” In other translations, this is also stated as, ‘Christ is the first fruit’. This means that whatever Christ has done, there will also be a huge harvest of others who will follow in His footsteps.

Paul explains it differently through Romans 6:5 which states, “For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.”

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This means that:

- The moment we place our faith and trust in Christ and recognise that we are sinners who will never be able to save ourselves but must rely on Jesus our Saviour, and pray to invite Him into our lives to be our Lord, God counts us as united in Christ. The wages of our sins have been paid for because we are now united with Christ on the cross.
- In the same way, when Christ rose from the dead, we also will rise from the dead and have life beyond our physical death. There is life and resurrection for us as believers.

This life we have extends beyond death and there is meaning even when we breathe our last breath. This is the hope that Christ has given to us.

CONCLUSION

Christ rose from the dead so that we are counted justified and to give us a sure and certain hope. Let us trust in this truth even when we go through challenges in our lives and allow God to mould us into Christ's likeness. When we hold on to this hope, we will also have the confidence and boldness to handle the pain and suffering that we face in life.

Because Christ is risen, we can experience an abundant life that extends beyond death. Because Christ is risen, we have the hope that beyond death, we will experience fullness of joy and live in His presence. Because Christ is risen, we who are united in Him will also rise with Him.

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A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Mark 16:1-8 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b.
 - (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Why"?
 - (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. Why is Jesus' resurrection the foundation for everything we live for and believe in as Christians?
- 2b. How does understanding Jesus rose from the dead to ensure that we are counted justified by God our Judge, who is also a God of wrath when sin is concerned, impact the way you:
 - (i) view the character of God?
 - (ii) relate to God?
 - (iii) will live out your faith?
- 3a. What does the sure and certain hope in Christ mean to you?
- 3b. What is one thing that prevents you from trusting in the truth that Jesus' resurrection promises?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to understand, know and live in the truth of hope in Jesus' resurrection, in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your testimony on how having a sure and certain hope in God helped you go through a difficult period in your life.

OR

Give thanks to God that through Jesus you have been justified from your sins and are able to approach God's throne of grace freely and confidently.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 3b and 3c to God asking for the Holy Spirit's revelation on areas in your life where you need to trust in the justification and hope that Jesus' resurrection promises. Pray also for your group and our church that the reality and power of Christ's resurrection will empower us to work on our relationships with God for Him to mould us into Christ's likeness.

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