**Walking in Newness of Life**

Based on Mark 16:1-8

Preached on April 21, 2019

The Resurrection of Our Lord ~ Easter Day

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Christ is Risen!

Someone once said, “The evidence for Jesus’ resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live.”

It is an unusual event. Not only because a man rose from the dead. That happened more than a few times by Jesus’ own hand. But unusual because he predicted it before he did it, and because theirs proof. A lot of religious people say that they have God’s word. But it’s always some sort of safe prediction. If you have enough faith your life will be happy. If your life still isn’t happy…that doesn’t prove they were wrong, it only proves you didn’t have enough faith. So no matter what happens—the person telling you what to do is never wrong. *It’s like marriage.* No, it’s just false religion.

But what’s unusual about the true religion is that—over against all other religious talk--Jesus’ resurrection is scientific. He accommodated our ignorance. He claimed and proclaimed was that he was sent from God to save the world and establish an eternal kingdom for his people. ***He predicted***, that he would suffer and die at the hands of sinful men, and that God would not abandon him to death. He ***allowed*** evil men to kill him, and allowed death to do its worst. And his message was ***proved*** when he rose from the dead . And, like a good scientist, he made sure the outcome was observed and catalogued. He appeared to many of his disciples, in the flesh, who had originally doubted because it was too incredible and showed he was alive, not a ghost, bearing the marks in his hands and side so that they could make a positive ID.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, and I’m not saying that we believe it because of the strength of the evidence. We believe it because of the Holy Spirit, who works in the Evidence proclaimed.

By nature we are selfish people, turned inward, disposed to interpret the world around us, not according to strong arguments and evidence, but according to what fits our agenda. Satan still whispers in our ear constantly, and we are eager to believe lies if it confirms our fears. Therefore, it is not the evidence alone, but the Holy Spirit works through the evidence catalogued in the Word of God, to enlighten us to the truth.

Therefore, when Mary, Mary and Salome went to the tomb on Easter Morning, and saw the stone rolled away and entered in…they didn’t just see an empty tomb. An empty tomb can be interpreted many different ways. The body was stolen to deceive us; dragged away by animals; maybe we got the wrong tomb? God didn’t leave the empty tomb to their interpretation. Instead he sent his messenger, a young man, an angel, to proclaim what the findings mean. He said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.”

It has been said, the evidence for Jesus resurrection is so strong, that nobody would question it except that, if you believed it happened, you have to change the way you live. /// According to Saint Paul, we are bapized and therefore raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Romand 6:4).

Maybe you know that your eyes, the way they work, are actually seeing upside-down right now. But very early on, your brain learned to automatically flip the image around. Your mind conforms what you see to your other senses. It’s fascinating. Your eyes, though they faithfully receive the light as it is presented to you, still give you a wrong picture. Your brain can retrain your eyes, or better put it can retrain itself to reorient what your eyes see…so that the vision you live by conforms to the reality around you. Your mind has to flip it around, but that’s doesn’t distort reality, that brings it into the right perspective.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit brings into perspective the meaning of the empty tomb. But he doesn’t float around convincing people at random. The devil prowls around like a roaring lion, but the holy spirit prowls around in the proclamation of the Gospel. You are trained to see things as upsidedown in a world of sin and death. Your heart is not willing, nor is it strong enough to flip the image to give you the right picture. When loved ones die, when you will face death, you need to have the word proclaimed to you that Christ is risen, and because of this you will rise again too.

The resurrection is not only proof that Jesus is God’s Son, It also proves that our sins are forgiven. He was bruised for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities, and God laid upon him the chastisement of us all….

The word preached in your ear causes you to straighten out your vision to see the glory of God hidden in the suffering and death of this world. Christ is raised, and we too shall rise on the last day. Death is but a sleep, and this world a dream compared to the reality of the glories that will be revealed to us on the day when our graves our opened, and we see the Lord coming to establish his kingdom and make all things new.

“We were buried therefore with him, by baptism, into death, just as Jesus Christ was raised by the glory of the father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4).