



from the desk of . . .
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The Apostles' Creed - 6

... THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD

Romans 10:9

Resurrection is really a universal quest. Even among those people who don't believe in a "religious" resurrection, it's still a kind of driving force.

We all want a 2nd chance. We all want another go-round. We'd all like to experience a future that's better than the present.

Right now, in our world, around the globe, governments are trying to "resurrect" their countries. U.S. businesses are always desiring to "resurrect" a bull market. Democrats & Republicans want to "resurrect" their political parties.

Communities are wanting to "resurrect" their downtowns.

The Bears & the Bulls are trying to "resurrect" their teams to a championship level ... & Tom & I are hoping that for the White Sox as well! I heard last week that because cookies are "so fattening", Kraft is "resurrecting" a new Oreo ... with 7 different flavors.

Resurrection is important to everyone ... especially to those of us in the Church. Resurrection is absolutely critical to our life, our faith, & our future. And that's what we'll be focusing on this morning in our 6th message on the Apostles' Creed ...

"the 3rd day he rose again from the dead."

Listen now to Good News from Paul to the Church in Rome, & also to the Church here in Rolling Meadows.

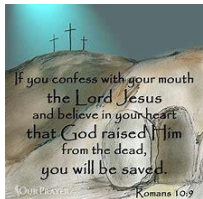
Within your hearing now comes the Word of the Lord ...

If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

May the Lord grant that we may engage in contemplating the mysteries of His Heavenly wisdom with really increasing devotion, to His glory and to our edification. Amen

Last week we focused on the cross. Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, & buried; he descended into hell."

The **cross** is the central symbol of the Christian faith. It's the most prominent object in our building. Can there be anything more important than the cross? ... Yes! The **resurrection** is even more important than the cross.



(X) Paul writes, "If you confess that Jesus is Lord & believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved."

Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is paramount to **coming to faith**; it is essential for our salvation.

On the flip side Paul tells the Corinthians, if there's no resurrection then we preachers are liars & you remain lost in your sins. (1 Corinthians 15:14-18) We're all doomed without it, so, the resurrection is absolutely critical.

It's even more important than the cross ... because God's work is always **progressive**. The next step/stage is always more significant than the one that preceded it.

We start out with Christmas ... (X) the most wonderful time of the year.

What could be more important than Christmas? ... If Jesus doesn't enter into humanity & rescue us ... we're all doomed.

What could be more important than that? ...

Well, Good Friday is more important. (X)

I mean, once Jesus is here He's got to fulfill His mission, (Matthew 16:21)

He's got to go to the cross.

Good Friday is more important than Christmas.

So, the cross must be the most important thing.

Could anything be better than Good Friday? ...

(X) Yes, Easter Sunday is.

We have Christmas, & Jesus is there.

And then we have the cross, & He went there.

But we've got to have a resurrection to cap it all off.



Without Easter Sunday the rest of it is all for naught.

The crucifixion left Peter hopeless,
sending him back to be a fisherman. (John 21:3)

But when the resurrection took place,
it energized him & he began "fishing" for people. (Luke 5:10)

The crucifixion caused Jesus' disciples to lock
themselves in the Upper Room, cowering in fear. (John 20:19)

But the resurrection inspired those disciples,
& they took the Gospel all over the world.

The crucifixion kept Judaism firmly established as
the religion of the day. Worship was centered on the
Sabbath (Saturday). But when the resurrection took
place worship shifted to Sunday.

So, every time we gather on Sunday, it's a mini-Easter.

We're orienting our entire lives around that particular
event ... Jesus rising from the grave.

Now not everyone believed in a literal, physical
resurrection. From the early days of the faith there
have always been those who've been more interested in a
"spiritual" resurrection.

Take the Corinthians. They were concerned about
getting the most out of life ... now. They weren't denying
the resurrection of Jesus, there was too much evidence
for that. But they were questioning that the bodies of
believers would be physically resurrected.

They had bought into the philosophical idea that the human body is evil; a kind of prison that we're forced to live in. But a day is coming when we will escape the body. It'll no longer be needed. It'll have served its' purpose.

The Corinthians were like the new-agers of today, that reflect so much of eastern religion thinking. It's our body that holds us back. Just give us a "spiritual" resurrection. And in the meantime,
 "Let us eat & drink, for tomorrow we will die."

To which Paul responds ...
 "I'm talking about a real literal, physical resurrection ...
 (& the specific word he uses, ἐγέρηται,
 means to stand up from the midst of corpses) ...
 & if you don't believe in it your whole faith is a delusion."
 I want us to ponder this morning why he would say that.

Okay, why is a literal, physical resurrection so central to our faith? ...

Now the resurrection is certainly a major theme in the N.T., but the most thorough explanation is found in 1 Corinthians 15. (And here's some homework for you ... I want you to read the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians.)

Listen to the opening verses ...
 "And now I want to remind you, my friends, of the Good News which I preached to you, which you received,
 & on which your faith stands firm.

"That is the gospel, the message that I preached to you. You are saved by the gospel if you hold firmly to it - unless it was for nothing that you believed.

"I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried & that he was raised to life 3 days later, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter & then to all 12 apostles. Then he appeared to more than 500 of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died." (1 Corinthians 15:1-6)

Paul's saying that not only did this take place, but there are 100's of witnesses running around. Ask them. They've seen Jesus. It's an **historical reality**.

"Now, since our message is that Christ has been raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; & if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach & you have nothing to believe. More than that, we are shown to be lying about God, because we said that he raised Christ from death - but if it is true that the dead are not raised to life, then he did not raise Christ. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion & you are still lost in your sins." (1 Corinthians 15:12-17)

I'm going to give you 4 reasons why Jesus' physical resurrection is absolutely critical, why it's the central milestone ... the **most important event** in all of history.

#1 ... the resurrection is the **vindication** of our Lord.

I want you to imagine that I'm proclaiming myself to be a prophet, & I'm introducing a new way to get to Heaven. Now my new religion consists of some physical things: daily exercise, deep meditation, & a diet of vanilla chai latte, cherry yogurt with granola, & crispy bacon.

And if you do all that ... you will be saved.

Now as I proclaim this message many will oppose me. In fact, they'll accuse me of being a blasphemer, maybe even being demon possessed. So how do I vindicate my life & message? How do I prove it to you? ...

What if I said ... "I'll prove that my way is the way. You can kill me anyway that you choose, & you can bury me anyway you want, & you can seal me in the tomb the best way you know how ... but, if I can burst out of there & rise again, then you better be off to the store for some running shoes & chai, cause I'm right!"

And that, very crudely, is exactly what Jesus Christ did. He came, claiming a unique relationship with the Father. He said things like, "The Father & I are one." ... (John 10:30)

"No one knows the Son except the Father,
& no one knows the Father except the Son & those
to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Matthew 11:27)

Jesus made unique claims to authority in His teachings. He said, "You have heard that people were told in the past" ... (everyone else says), "but now I tell you" (Matthew 5:21-22) He claimed to speak with His own authority. He claimed authority over the traditional practices of Judaism, concerning the Sabbath & Sabbath keeping.

"The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." (Matthew 12:8)

And not only did He claim a unique relationship with God, & sovereign authority, but He claimed to Himself divine prerogatives. Everybody knows that no one can forgive sins but God Himself. Yet when Jesus encountered a paralyzed man, He not only healed him but He said ... "My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5)

And the teachers of the Law had a fit.

"This is blasphemy!

God is the only one who can forgive sins!" (Mark 2:7)

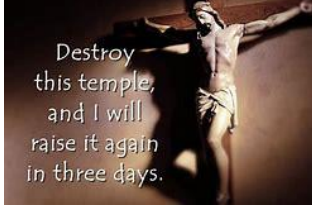
Well, Jesus claimed to be able to say such words.

He said ... "I am the way, the truth, & the life; no one goes to the Father except by me." (John 14:6)

He took a central celebration of Judaism, the Passover, & said ... from now on; every time you eat the bread & drink from the cup I want you to

"do this in memory of me." (Luke 22:19)

He took the Temple, the prominent symbol of Judaism, & standing before it, Jesus proclaimed ...



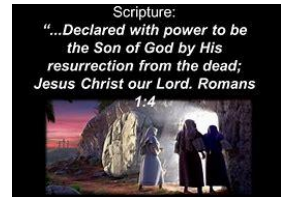
(X) "Tear down this Temple, & in 3 days I will build it again." (John 2:19)

Of course, He wasn't speaking about the stone & mortar Temple, but the temple of His own body.

How do we validate His message? ... Well, Jesus lets them kill Him in the most brutal way they know how. And He lets them put Him in a tomb, where people knew He was. And He let them seal it, the best way they could, even posting a Roman guard. Stamping on that grave, "do not disturb, under orders of the Roman Empire."

(Matthew 27:65-66)

And on the 3rd day He bursts forth from that tomb, in power, legitimating His message & vindicating His Messiahship. (X) "Jesus was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death." (Romans 1:4)



So, Paul writes to the Corinthians ... "If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised." And if He hasn't been raised, then no atonement for our sins was made. This means that we're still lost in our sins, & the grave has power over us all.

Belief in a physical resurrection vindicates our Lord & His message & His Messiahship.

We have no faith, or hope, without it.

2nd ... a physical resurrection is the **validation** of our hope.

We all want a shot at immortality. We all want to live forever. Philosophers would argue that our whole manner of life is really based on a battle with death.

We do whatever we can to try to stave off death. We inject ourselves with Botox & silicon & stomach staples & Slim Fast. Why do we endure all that stuff? ... It's because we don't want to die. We don't even want to look like one day we're going to die.

Well, Scripture teaches that we can actually have hope in immortality, in resurrection. (John 6:58) His **resurrection** becomes our **resurrection**; & our hope for **immortality**. We're bound up in a way that's described as "with Christ" ... (which is the N.T.'s favorite term for expressing what it means to be a follower of Jesus).

"But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised. For just as death came by means of a man, in the same way the rising from death comes by means of a man. For just as all people die because of their union with Adam, in the same way all will be raised to life because of their union with Christ. But each one will be raised in proper order: Christ, 1st of all; then, at the time of his coming, those who belong to him." (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

Paul's saying that we share our life with Christ,
just as we shared our life with Adam.
The fate that befell Adam, befell us.

And, the fate that befell Jesus, befalls us.
 When Jesus died on the cross ... it included the death
 our sin nature. And, when He burst out of that grave &
 experienced resurrection ... it was our resurrection too.

Our life is bound up **with Christ**.

Scripture reaffirms this over & over.

"Jesus will change our weak mortal bodies & make them
 like his own glorious body, using that power by which
 he is able to bring all things under his rule." (Philippians 3:21)

"We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him,
 because we shall see him as he really is." (1 John 3:2)

"Listen to this secret truth: we shall not all die, but when
 the last trumpet sounds, we shall all be changed in an
 instant, as quickly as the blinking of an eye. For when
 the trumpet sounds, the dead will be raised, never to die
 again, & we shall all be changed. For what is mortal must
 be changed into what is immortal; what will die must be
 changed into what cannot die." (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

I don't know what we'll look like in Heaven?

If we'll be all chiseled & buffed & looking 25 again?

But we will have a glorious resurrected body, which will
 move & operate just like Jesus' resurrected body.

Resurrection is the vindication of our Lord,
 the validation of our hope,
 & it's also the **vanquishing** of our great enemy, death.
 Death has been called the ultimate statistic.

One out of every one persons dies. 2 people die in this world every second. 87 have died since our worship began. 156,000 will die today. 57,000,000 people a year ... die. Death is chewing us up. (Romans 6:23)

And should the Lord tarry ... each of us will die one day (Hebrews 9:27) ... but we're not going to face the eternal ramifications of death. (Romans 8:1)

We won't face the condemnation, which we deserve ... if we know Christ, & the power of His own resurrection. He paid the price for us, He took our punishment, to vanquish our great enemy.

Listen to these words ... (X)

"Then the end will come; Christ will overcome all spiritual rulers, authorities, & powers, & will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father.

For Christ must rule until God defeats all enemies & puts them under his feet. The last enemy to be defeated will be death. ... Then the scripture will come true:

'Death is destroyed; victory is complete!'

'Where, Death is your victory?'

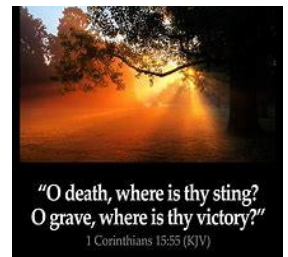
Where, Death, is your power to hurt?'"

(1 Corinthians 15:24-26,54-55)

It's nowhere to be found because death has been vanquished, & immortality becomes our lot, our destiny.

Think about what that means.

Think about the wonder of being immortal.



Immortality is an **attribute** of God. God has many attributes & theologians typically categorize them as communicable attributes & incommunicable attributes.

Communicable attributes are those that God has that we can share. God is love ... & we can be loving.

God is faithful ... & we can be faithful.

God is merciful ... & we can be merciful.

But then there's a whole list of incommunicable attributes ... those that God has that we can't.

God is omniscient, He knows everything ... we don't.
God's omnipresent, He's everywhere ... we're localized in one place. God is immortal ... &, of course,
we are all quite mortal, heading toward the grave.

But then, God's going to take this incommunicable attribute of immortality, which only belongs to Him,
& He's going to give it to us so that we too are immortal.

We're going to be raised immortal! Sin & death will be absolutely eliminated even as possibilities for us. And we will live, if we're "with Christ", forever, glorious in Heaven. It's guaranteed by Jesus' resurrection.

That's why Paul states ... "if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion & you are still lost in your sins. ... But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised."

We have nothing but immortality to look forward to.

Now death has ravaged this "Body" ...
just as it has done every Church around the globe.

I was thinking this week of some of the "saints" who have passed from this congregation since I've been here:

Audrey Krause, Ernie Troutman, Florence Nyblin,
Doug White, Helen Haynes, Fred Grindol, Elaine Werling,
Willie Haynes, Hattie Andree, Elaine Grunwald, Rose
Schon, Ed Garrity, Evie Peters, Ray Slaninka, Carol Kees,
Harold Kees, Bill Boubal, Judy Powell, Luella Cobb,
Frank Shaw, Marion Bass, Judy Scott, Bob Roeske, Emma
Broadbent, Pat Tessendorf, Sue Hart, Ginny Borgardt,
June Shaver, Leisa Voleck, Betty Miner, Peg Roeske,
David Cobb, Ardie Maiden, George Nellesen, Jackie
Cvikota, Jan Wittrock, Carl Maiden, Gene Porten, Phyllis
Denton, Ray Wever, Arlene Amundsen, Bill Poulsen, Dodie
Golz, Marilyn Grindol, Edie LaPoint, Betty Kane, Fred
Potter, Norma Hill, Bea Neubecker, Morris Replogle,
Lois Wilhusen, Larry Shaver, Joe Denton, Jim Ferguson,
Audrey Koester, Lucille Jetseck, Ruth Siers,
Ken Schroeder, Freda Schulz, Tony Voleck, Ann Dean,
Susan Badame, Sandy Bozin, Linda Porten.

They, & many others, were all once with us, & are now gone. But do you know what resurrection teaches? ... The last **enemy** doesn't get the last **word**. And we're going to see them, raised up, & glorious again someday.

And we're going to share an eternal life of community & joy in the Lord with them forever & ever.

Hold on to that hope.

The resurrection is the vanquishing of the last enemy, for those we loved who have gone on before us.

One last impact of the resurrection ... we can't stop with the 1st 3. The resurrection is the **vector** of our lives. What I mean by that is that the hope of the resurrection is not just some theory that's out there, "a pie in the sky" that maybe we get someday.

No, the resurrection is a current reality, which directs our lives into eternity. It takes us right here, where we're at this point in time, & it sends us, straight & true toward a future with God in Heaven. It directs our lives.

It determines our present course.

Our destiny is resurrection, & that means something for the way we live right now.

"My friends, I face death every day! ... But if the dead are not raised to life, then, as the saying goes, 'Let us eat & drink, for tomorrow we will die.' Do not be fooled. 'Bad companions ruin good character.' Come back to your right senses & stop your sinful ways. I declare to your shame that some of you do not know God."

(1 Corinthians 15:31-34)

What's Paul driving at in these verses?

He's saying that the hope of the resurrection is the force of his life. He's putting it on the line every day. He faces the possibility of death every single day. And why is he doing that if there's no future hope for him?

"Why do I face 'wild beasts' in Ephesus?"

Those "wild beasts" were people that Paul encountered daily who were trying to beat him down.

So, he likens his ministry to the games in the Coliseum, where believers were fed to wild animals. Paul asks ...

"I'm facing wild beasts here in Ephesus every day. And if there's no resurrection, what's the point?"

Paul's saying that what we see out there on our horizon determines the present course of our life. And in the end, there's really only 2 ways in which to live.

We can focus on this horizon, or we can live with our aim on the next horizon. What do you see at the end? Do you see just death? Or do you see beyond that, to a resurrection, into an eternity with God? What we see out there determines what we're doing today.

If we see only today then it's "eat & drink, for tomorrow we will die." Live for pleasure ... now.

(X) Where are we building our treasures?

(Matthew 6:19-21)

If this life is all there is ... then be concerned about what you have & all that you can get.

Store up riches.



If that's what you see, well ...
 "eat & drink, for tomorrow we will die."

But for those of us who are followers of Jesus, we
 pin our hopes on the next life. We see beyond the grave.

We see into eternity.

We hold onto the hope of resurrection.

And that means, of course, we have only 2 rules to
 live by ... love & love.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your
 soul, with all your mind, & with all your strength." And,
 "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." (Mark 12:30-31)

We're headed toward a Kingdom that's fully defined
 by love. We're living as agents of a King who Himself is
 love. (1 John 4:8) We're on our way to that future & that
 destiny. We're on our way to glory ... on our way to
 holiness ... on our way to immortality.

So that drives our life right now.

Let's suppose some fortuneteller came to you this
 morning & told you that you were going to become the
 next great trial lawyer in America, would you begin to
 study law or not? ... What if he told you that you were
 going to become the next great Senior PGA champion ...

do you hit more golf balls or do you hit less? ...

If somebody could come & tell you what you're destined
 to be in this life, I dare say that you would begin to
 direct your life on that, & it would change your behavior.

You'd actually begin to work out in the present what you're becoming in the future. And that's what the power of the resurrection does for us.

It's not just a "keep our fingers crossed" hope out there. It's the thing that determines our direction of life right now. It's what kept Paul listening for God's voice, ready to take the next risk, prepared to die for the cause of the Gospel,
because there's an existence beyond death.



(X) When Henry Ward Beecher was a boy, he had a teacher who asked one of the boys in class a question which the boy answered. The teacher became angry & told the boy he was wrong & commanded him to ... "Sit down!"

The boy was obviously confused because he'd thought he'd answered correctly, but he sat abruptly down. Several boys were asked the same question, they gave the same answer & were promptly rebuked by their teacher.

Finally, Beecher was asked to stand & answer the question. He gave the same answer & was commanded "Sit Down!" But Beecher held his ground & insisted that the answer was correct.

For a few moments the teacher stormed at him, but seeing Beecher wasn't going to give up he smiled & said ...

"Well, boys, you were all correct, but Beecher was the only one sure enough to stand up for it."

Many people have lost their faith in Christ because they simply lacked the courage to stand up for what they believed. They'd grown so used to apologizing for their faith that anytime someone mounted a serious challenge they just gave up & sat down.

My prayer is that you will be impacted by the resurrection the same way Paul was. The Gospel that we proclaim is not just a Gospel of forgiveness of sins, of God's acceptance of us as we are. It's a Gospel of future resurrection, of God's transformation in us, making us more than we are.

That's what I need, & I'm confident it's what you need too. I need more than a God who just accepts me as I am. I need a God who can take me as I am & make me more than I am ... so that I can be like Him, so that I can be fully equipped to enjoy life in the Kingdom for eternity. (John 10:10)

And that's what the Gospel does. It offers us the cross, the atonement, & forgiveness for our sins. And it offers us resurrection hope & life & power today to cause us to be & become more than what we once were.

"If we confess that Jesus is Lord & believe that God raised him from death, we will be saved."

MARANA THA

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

he descended into hell;

the third day he rose again from the dead;

he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian Church;

the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;

the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

Amen

If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

The _____ is the central symbol of the Christian faith

The _____ is even more important than the cross

Belief in the resurrection of Jesus is paramount to _____

God's work is always _____

The resurrection is an _____

Jesus' physical resurrection is the _____ in history

- the resurrection is the _____ of our Lord
- a physical resurrection is the _____ of our hope

Jesus' _____ becomes our _____; and our hope for _____

Our life is bound up _____

- resurrection is the _____ of our great enemy, death

Immortality is an _____ of God

The last _____ doesn't get the last _____

- the resurrection is the _____ of our lives