

Easter 3 Sermon, April 26, 2020  
So what is Jesus doing in your life today? Luke 24:13-35

Do you know the greatest recorded event in human history? This event is a fact of history, written about by many individuals who either saw the event themselves or spoke with eye witnesses. Is it Columbus' arrival in America? Is it the D-Day invasion of Normandy or perhaps the detonation of the first nuclear bomb over Hiroshima? Or maybe is it Neil Armstrong's landing on the moon? These are all climactic human events in the history of our world. None of these events are disputed. In fact, each one of these events has much written about it. But they are not "the" event that I am talking about here. No, what I am referring to is the resurrection of Jesus Christ: a historical fact. Now, there are those who have tried to pervert history. There are nay-sayers who say Jesus' resurrection was a fable, a story, a sham, or whatever. But regardless of what they are anyone says, Jesus' resurrection is a historical fact; it's literally the turning-point in human history; it is a real fact that impacted millions of people 2,000 years ago and continues to impact billions of people today. Today we are going to look at what this historical fact is doing for you and your life.

The message today we read about two men walking along who were talking about this huge event that had just happened in Jerusalem, in fact the most profound event in the history of the world—the scandalous and sensational execution by crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus who Himself had been healing the sick, raising the dead and was even called "the King of the Jews." These walking men were talking about it; they obviously know most of the details, maybe even saw Jesus as He dragged His cross through the village. And then as they are walking along, Jesus Himself appears to them and they don't recognize the Lord for Who He is. Jesus appears and they just think He's a fellow traveler, just like they are. They continue to talk about Jesus, not knowing that in fact they are talking with Jesus.

Why can't they see Jesus for Who He is? How come they can't see Jesus at work in their lives right in this very moment? So Jesus asks them interrogating questions in order to lead and guide them into understanding the importance of these events that they had just witnessed. I like how Jesus opens the conversation by asking them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" The one named Cleopas, basically asks Jesus, "what else would we be talking about? I mean, where you have been? Haven't you heard about this great scandal, about the things that have just happened here in these last few days?"

Although these guys open their dialogue with calling Jesus a prophet, “powerful in word and deed before God and all people,” the rest of their dialogue, although correct, reveals that they don’t really understand the importance of the crucifixion and resurrection. They do reveal that they had hoped that Jesus was the promised Messiah, that Jesus would be the One to finally deliver and free Israel. But to them, it couldn’t be the case because the Jews and the Romans killed Jesus. To them, Jesus was just another false prophet. Maybe a good guy, but a false prophet.

And yet these men knew that Jesus said that He had to die and would be raised again on the third day. And they reported to Jesus that some people heard that Jesus had risen from the dead. They can’t put two and two together. The Jews couldn’t see Jesus for Who He was and so they killed Him. And these men couldn’t see the Savior of the world working in their lives. In fact, Jesus is walking with them, they’re talking about Jesus, and yet they can’t see Him for who He is.

In our reading last week, we looked at how important faith in the living Jesus Christ is—how Jesus presented His resurrected body to Thomas so that Thomas might believe, and how Jesus gives us His body and blood through Communion so that we might believe too. Does the resurrection of Jesus Christ really matter? The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians writes “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.” Exactly. It’s all or nothing. If Jesus wasn’t resurrected, if the Lord isn’t alive now, then we have no chance at life either.

It is simple to discount human history of long ago and to discount the very real fact that Jesus Christ does live and that this event was witnessed by hundreds of people. Think about this, people who witnessed the resurrection were talking about Jesus’ resurrection, and people who heard them talk were talking with others. If the resurrection was fake, the eye could certainly have confirmed or denied the accuracy of such accounts. The writers of the four Gospels either had themselves been witnesses or else were relating the accounts of eyewitnesses of the actual events. Nothing changes the fact that the tomb really was empty. Bottom line...it really happened and the Jesus of history is the Christ of faith. Looking into the empty tomb, the women heard the angels ask, “why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen.”

Friends, Jesus Christ has risen! He is alive! Jesus has risen to work miracles in your life. Yes, you and I are not eye witnesses to the historical events of His

death and resurrection, but we are faith witnesses. We can have the same faith to believe as the eye witnesses had. Think about it, these men who walked with Jesus couldn't see Him for Who He was. What changed? How come they suddenly recognized Jesus as the risen Lord? Verse 30 tells us, "when he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him." We can recognize Jesus for Who He is and what He does in our lives by those same means of Grace. We study the Scriptural Words written about the Lord—our Bible. We are baptized for the forgiveness of sins into the body of Christ. And just like Thomas could touch the resurrected Lord, we partake of His Holy meal, where receive His true body and blood. God gives us forgiveness of sins in these means of Grace and the Holy Spirit continues to reveal the truth of Jesus Christ and His workings in our lives every day.

So what is Jesus Christ doing in your life today? Our Savior tells us straight-up, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Jesus Christ came into this world for us. He lived among us for us. He died for us. And He rose again. You might not have witnessed these events with your own eyes, but my friends, the historical truth is that many people did witness the resurrected Lord Jesus with their own eyes. Jesus Christ is our living God. And He lives for us. And because He lives, so do we. It's real, historical fact. So what is Jesus doing in your life today? Amen.

May the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.