



St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)

Worship Address : Cerritos High School Auditorium
12500 E. 183rd St., Cerritos, CA 90703
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April 4, 2010

Theme: The Public, Powerful, Personal Resurrection of Jesus

Text: Matthew 28:16-20

Is this really true? Are the claims of Matthew 28 really true? These may sound like strange questions. We are the Church after all. If it is true that Jesus was raised from the dead and that he promised to be with His disciples until the end of history, then every person in this room should believe and follow Him as Lord. I sometimes think that we have become comfortably numb to the message that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Think about the claim that Jesus made for Himself. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..." If it is true, this means that Jesus is Lord of the universe. He is Lord of the worlds and of this world. It means that we are now living in a new age—the age of Jesus. Jesus is Lord of rulers, governments, politics, and military power. He is Lord of industry, economics and the stock market. He is lord of science, discovery, and education. He is Lord of Tsunamis, floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes. This is His time. These are His days. This is His age. If all this is true as He claims, then the most important action that I could take would be to put my trust in Him and follow Him until I die or He returns—whichever comes first.

The resurrection of Jesus is one of the most important events in history. I say one of the most important events because there are two others that equal it: First there is the crucifixion which occurred three days earlier in history. Second, there is the second coming which has yet to occur. The three are connected. If Jesus had not been crucified as a sacrifice of atonement for our sins, there would be no forgiveness of sins. On the other hand if Jesus had not been raised from the dead, we would have no basis for claiming that his death was God's sacrifice of atonement for our sins. Jesus would have been just one more crucified Jew. If He does not return to the earth to put down evil forever, then his claim to possess all authority in the universe is lame and empty.

Although this is an old, old, story, I want to say a several things about the crucifixion: (1) First, it as a public event. It is not a myth. It was historical and public. A Roman historian named Tacitus wrote about how Christ was put to death by Pontius Pilate. (2) Jesus crucifixion was painful. However, the primary pain was not physical. The primary pain was spiritual. Jesus did not cry out in pain until in His humanity, he was abandoned by the Father. Then he cried, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" Jesus was abandoned by the Father because He carried out sins upon His shoulders. (3) The crucifixion was not an accident of history. It was not the result of a misunderstanding between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders. It was something that God planned before history began. (4) When he was crucified, Jesus received God's punishment for our sin, as Isaiah prophesied, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our



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iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." (5) Because Jesus received our punishment for our sins his crucifixion was priceless. There should never come a time when we cease to value what Christ did for us at the cross.

But Jesus cannot be priceless to us if He is still dead. But He is not still dead, He is alive, and therefore Jesus' death and Jesus Himself are priceless to us. There is of course a lot that we could say about Jesus' resurrection. I want to say three things about it today. (1) Like Jesus' crucifixion, His resurrection was public. When the woman went to the tomb on that Sunday morning, they were met by an angel, who said to them, "He is not here. He is risen! Come see the place where he was lying." Jesus then appeared to the apostles, and to over 500 believers at one time. The reason that the Jewish authorities could not stamp out the Jesus movement is because they could not produce the body of Jesus; they could not disprove the disciples' claim that Jesus had risen bodily from the grave.

(2) Jesus resurrection was powerful. Jesus is now at the right hand of God which means that He shares in Gods All-Powerful rule over the universe. Even now he is working out His purposes for salvation in this world with authority over all other powers that operate here as we have said. Because He has all authority and is All-Powerful, his purpose cannot fail. He will not fail. This is a powerful reason to follow Him as well. He will not fail in His purpose. Satan, sin, hell, and death cannot defeat Him. His will shall be done. It would be suicide to oppose or ignore Him. Scripture says that ever knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

(3) The resurrection of Jesus is personal. In verse 20 Jesus says, "And surely I am with you until the very end of the age." We could turn Jesus' claim to have all authority into a spiritual problem by asking, "If Jesus has all authority in the universe, why is our world such a mess?" But there is another approach that we could take to Jesus' claims. We could understand His claim to authority and His promise to be with us as an offer to free us from sin and fear and greed and so on so that we could be free to love and serve and sacrifice and never lose. We could be set free and set loose by God in a world that is falling apart. There is coming a day when Jesus will come to put down evil once and for all in this world. Until that day, he unleashes His Almighty power into the Church and into the lives of individuals who dare to believe Him. The question is: Do we have eyes to see what the potential of our lives might be if we were to live them in the powerful and personal resurrected life of Jesus Christ? May God give us such Resurrection eyes.