

## "Living in the Resurrection"

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Here we are at the end of the six windows of the sanctuary. We end at the window on this side of the sanctuary. It's the window of an Easter Lily. It represents the final earthly event of Christ's life. This side of the sanctuary has highlighted Christ's life on this earth, so it is fitting that we end on the greatest moment of Christ's life.

In this series, we have discussed where we can draw inspiration from in our faith experience. We have covered quite a bit in these past six weeks. We have gone from the basics of faith, from acts of the church, such as communion and prayer. We've discussed where we draw our inspiration and knowledge of our faith from, which is the Bible. Then as I've mentioned we've walked through the life of Christ. So here we are at the end of our faith story. Or is it merely the beginning of what we know and hold dear in our faith experience?

The Resurrection is the moment of Christ's life that truly launched what we believe to be known as Christianity. Christ lived an amazing life on this earth, preaching hope to the lost and giving a message of a better future to those who felt that they had no future. He preached a message that would affect all people and bring people closer to their creator God. Christ lived an inspiring life. It was a life that showed us true hope and true faith.

Last week we discussed the tragic end of Christ on the cross. Yes, Christ suffered a horrible death on the cross and was the last person that needed to face a death as horrible as crucifixion. The Perfect Man on earth did not deserve to die for the crimes he was accused of. He went to the cross to show how much he loved us and how much he wanted to die for our redemption. He took the bravest route a person could take in order that we might live born anew in Him.

The story of Christ does not end at the cross. No, the end of Christ will never come at all. In fact, the cross was a catalyst, or way of bringing about, the greatest moment of human history. Here is the not-so-secret secret to Christianity. Death didn't have the final word. In fact, death was defeated by Christ in one act showing us that indeed we would have a new life if we believed in Christ and held on to our faith in God.

What is this moment of history that brought forth life over death? It is the Resurrection. The resurrection is the event that happened on Easter morning where Christ was raised up from the dead and showed the world that he did not die, but rose again in life. Christ is the only person to have totally died and be buried and then rise up out of the grave into a new life. How did this happen though? What is the story behind this? Why is this so foundational to what we believe as Christians? Ultimately, what does this mean for us today, to live into the resurrection?

The Resurrection story takes different forms in the gospels. The basic story is this; after Christ had been crucified, it was believed that his body needed to be tended to so it could rest properly. Also, followers of Christ were still mourning his loss and came to his grave to mourn. However, they did not find what they expected. They found Christ arisen and alive.

He first appeared to the women, for they were strong followers of Christ. This also shows that Christ cared not only for men, but believed that women were just as important as men on this earth. This would have been a ground-shaking belief for the time of Christ, for it was commonly believed that women were lower than men. Instead in this moment of greatest hope, Christ showed us that indeed women were just as valuable as men by this act of appearing to the women first.

From there, the story begins to differ on what happened next. It is commonly accepted that Christ then went about making appearances to other followers showing that he had arisen.

This caused a huge stir. Christ had fulfilled the ancient prophecies that the Messiah had arisen from death. Christ fulfilled his own prophecies that he would rise up from the dead, proving that he indeed was the Son of God that would defeat death.

Yet not all people did not accept that Christ had truly arisen from the dead. One of the disciples, Thomas, believed that this was all a hoax. It was not until that Christ had shown Thomas the holes in his hand that Thomas believed that this was a risen savior. It took an act of faith for the disciples to accept that Christ had truly risen from the dead, which gives us a clue into understanding the resurrection in our day and time.

For all of those recorded in the scriptures who saw the risen Christ, they had it really easy compared to us today. For us today we don't have the ability to go back into time and witness the resurrection first hand. It's a past event. It's an event that has already taken place in human history. But that does not mean that we have to dismiss it because it is a past event. In fact, we can draw inspiration from this event and use it to have faith in Christ.

For us today, we have to have faith in the events in recorded in the bible. For us to draw inspiration in Christ we have to have faith in the in stories present. This is the foundation of our Christian belief and that is faith. Faith is what we need to live into the resurrection in this day.

Faith is the central act that we take as Christians. In our book study this past week we discussed faith and how it plays such a role in our Christian experience. We learned a very key thing about faith that causes us to think deeper about what our faith is to us. For we learned that faith is not just about believing the right things. In fact, faith is more than that, and the major component to the faith is relationship.

As a people wanting to understand the resurrection, we need to understand that our faith is not a one way street. In fact, I find faith to be a two way street. It's a line of connection

between Christ and us. We don't just believe in Christ, we enter into a relationship with Christ where we can interact with Christ. By interacting with Christ we open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit can guide us as Christ would guide us, so that we can be the hands and feet of Christ in this world.

But ultimately, this relationship is not an equal relationship. We receive far more from Christ than we can give. That's the wonder of Christ. For in all of our brokenness Christ gives us more than we need so we can go about our lives. Christ doesn't need us in order for Christ to be Christ. This is the example that we need to have in our lives. Christ gives more than we can give to Christ, which is the perfect model for us as we interact with others. We are called to give more than we are to receive. By living into this idea, we are living out the resurrection. We are then living out our faith in this world.

Yet faith is still not a simple matter when dealing with Resurrection. In 1 Corinthians, Paul spends a whole chapter of his letter to the Corinthians explaining the Resurrection and what it means for the community of believers. It's a foundation that we can live into. I highly recommend a full reading of 1 Corinthians 15.

I've given you my account on the Resurrection and how it plays out in faith. I've stated why I believe that Christ went to the cross for us. I've even gone back and stated why Christ came into the world. Paul offers up his thoughts on this in 1 Corinthians. I believe Paul's view is important for us to understand in this world as we go about placing our faith in the resurrection.

Paul does state much of what I have stated about the actual resurrection event and the prophecy that was fulfilled. Yet Paul makes a personal claim in this that I believe is important for us. I look to the passage "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am

the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain."

Here we have Paul stating how unfit of a person he is for Christ to appear to him. Paul was once a person who persecuted Christians, yet seeing the risen Christ changed him. Paul claims throughout his letters that indeed he was unfit to receive the love of God and experience the resurrection in our lives. Yet this brings an interesting point for us today. Aren't we all unfit to receive the resurrection in our lives?

I do believe that as a people we are unfit to have the resurrection occur for us. We are a broken people that have done much wrong on this earth. But through grace we can place our faith in the resurrection. I speak as a sinner that I am unfit for the glory of God, but because of Christ's love for me on the cross and the hope of the resurrection I can experience God's great love in my life. This is an open invitation for us all in Paul's writing.

Faith in the resurrection gives us an opportunity to receive the great love of God in our lives. Like I mentioned earlier, we receive a greater amount of love than we can give back to God. That is our human nature. By having faith in the resurrection though, we can have faith in the great love of God. This is available for all people on this earth. This love is available for you as a person.

The work has been done for you. Christ has lived, died, and lived again for you. Through the love of the resurrection we can go forth in a relationship with God. It's the new covenant between God and human. Christ lived his life for us that we can have faith in God and live into a new life. This is what we are all about. Christ lived through a great transformation, and through faith we can have a transformation in our lives and move forward in love and faith.

After the resurrection occurred and people then had faith in Christ, he gave us an important command at the end of Matthew. He gave us the commandment that we are to go out and make disciples of all nations. He gave the commandment to his disciples then, and the commandment is given to us this day as disciples in the modern day.

I have said it so many times before from this point but it is a point that we need to keep on the forefront as we go about our work as a congregation. We have a story to share to the world and Christ has told us that we need to spread that message. Coming soon in the church, we'll begin to focus on our mission and find ways to spread the gospel to the community. Work is beginning in committees to look outside into the community and find ways to spread the message of Christ to the world. We are going to have to become a community that will live out our faith in the world.

It is through this mission work of creating disciples that I believe is how we live out our faith in the resurrection. Much has been stated on faith, on what it means for us personally. We need to live out our faith as a community now. We need to take the love given to us by Christ and share as much as possible with the world. We have to live out our faith in the hope for transformation for all people. The people of the world are in need of the faith of the resurrection so that they can live full and complete lives.

We've reached the end of our series on the windows in the sanctuary. We have reached the point where we have explored inspiration from so many parts of our faith as Christians. It has been quite the journey exploring all of these elements. It may be the end of the our series on the windows in the sanctuary, but it is not the end of our journey with Christ. I charge us to live out our faith in this world, so that we may know Christ in our lives, and so that the world can know Christ in their lives. Amen.