

Sermon- Establishing the most Powerful Kingdom on Earth

Scripture: Matt 28: 1-15

Sunday, April 21, 2019

Resurrection Sunday. The day we celebrate the incredible event of Christ returning to life as he walked out of a sealed and guarded tomb. Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 15:14 says this, “And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless”. The Resurrection is the central act of his earthly mission. It is the event that caused world history itself to take an unexpected turn. And yet, there are many people who believe in the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ but have not connected that fact to the rest of their understanding of the world or their own daily life. A famous person once said, ideas have consequences. Sure, but only if you connect the idea to your understanding and your understanding to your actions. What I want to do today is give you a frame to understand the message of the Resurrection in a way that enables you to connect the dots from Christ’s Resurrection to your day to day actions.

To do this I will rewind the clock from the Resurrection event to the time when Jesus was in the teaching phase of His ministry. At that time he taught that his purpose among them was as described in Luke 4:43 “to preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God”. Now, who is the king of the Kingdom of God? It is Jesus himself. But there was a problem. Because there was already a ruler in this world. John 12:31 says that the prince of this world is Satan himself. Now when you look at history you will see that there is only one way that kingdoms change rulers. It is by the use of force. That is why most wars are fought in history, because some new king comes on the scene and thinks he is more powerful than some other king and so he fights a war, destroys the other king and takes his territory and his stuff. Kings expand their territory by a display of force in the territory of another ruler. That is what a war is.

So coming back to Jesus Christ, His ministry was to establish his kingdom, in the territory taken over by Satan. So what does he do to take back his kingdom? He demonstrates his power in Satan's territory. Now Jesus does not demonstrate his power by raising an army and defeating a few people. Jesus was not interested in showing military power. Jesus demonstrates his power by healing the sick, calming the storm and casting out demons. By these actions he was demonstrating a power much greater than military power. In [Luke 11:20](#), he says, *"if I am casting out demons by the power **of God**, then the **Kingdom of God** has arrived among you."* You see by dislodging Satan's minions from people, Jesus was showing both Satan and people who was really the boss.

After he finished his teaching ministry, Jesus enters the climax of his ministry which was His crucifixion and Resurrection. And as Jesus transitions to the preparation for the cross, he reminds his disciples that there is much more going on than meets the eye. For example as the time comes for him to be betrayed, Jesus knows that when he is captured and beaten, it is not going to look like he has much power at all. In fact he is going to look completely powerless. Yet before Judas and the Roman soldiers come he tells his disciples this, in John 14:30 *"I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no **power** over me"*. You see Jesus was telling his disciples a secret they would not understand till much later. That even though it looked like Jesus was being overpowered, those Roman soldiers really did not have any power over him.

When we move forward in time, Jesus is now beaten and scourged. He is bloody from head to toe, and so tired that he can hardly stand and in that state he is made to face Pilot in a trial. This trial generates one of my favorite exchanges in the Bible. In [John 19:10](#) Pilate tells Jesus, *"Why don't you talk to me?" "Don't you realize that I have the **power** to release you or crucify you?"* And Jesus replies, *"You would have no **power** over me at all unless it were given to you from above."* So in that moment when Jesus standing seemingly helpless in front of Pilot, he never loses sight of an incredible fact.

That all power on earth comes from God, whether the ruler is good or evil. He knows that even as he stands looking helpless, Pilot is only acting on power he is dished out from his heavenly father. And he knows exactly why his heavenly Father has dished out this power to Pilot. And he lets Pilot know this.

And what does Pilot do with his power over Jesus? Well in the end he gives permission to inflict the maximum harm that any human being can inflict on another human being. That was what crucifixion was. But the interesting thing is that Jesus takes it without resistance, and as a result, his body is broken to the point of death. That was Good Friday. Now we don't fully understand what happened between Friday and Sunday. But we know this. Jesus Christ finished his earthly work on Good Friday. Saturday was the day of rested. Sunday, His heavenly Father raised him from the dead. It was not like Lazarus' resurrection. Jesus' Resurrection conferred on him a different kind of body. It was a body that could never die again.

But what I want to point out for you today is that Jesus' Resurrection was the ultimate power move. He was saying, if the maximum damage that human beings partnering with Satan can do to a fellow human being is what you saw on Good Friday, then rejoice. Because your King knows to take Good Friday and turn it into Easter. Death to life, despair to hope, pain to joy. Is that Good News or what? And it gets even better. See Jesus did not die and rise again to prove anything to himself or give himself some power he did not already have. Jesus was perfectly fine up in heaven before all this went down. You see, Jesus went through Calvary to give you and me something we never had. Some very special powers. You see Jesus' purpose was to infuse every kingdom citizen with their own extraordinary power to continue the mission of the king on earth. Because God's mission can only be carried out by people who know and can use God's power. [Luke 10:19](#) says, *Look, I have given you authority over all the **power** of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you.* You see that? This verse is not saying every kingdom citizen has immunity to

snake venom. No it is saying that when it comes to carrying out God's mission, when God sends you into a place, poisonous snakes and scorpions will not be able to stop kingdom citizens from doing Kingdom work. Apostle Paul who demonstrated this power over snake bites puts it this way in [1 Corinthians 4:20](#) *For the **Kingdom of God** is not just a lot **of** talk; it is living by **God's** power.*

Now there are three areas of Resurrection power that I want to bring to your awareness today.

The first is power over yourself or what the Bible calls denying the flesh. The term "flesh" here covers our physical impulses and our self will. If we are fully in the world then we are completely controlled by our fleshly desires or our self-will. The world tells us to be self-motivated. But Jesus said "if any one wants to follow me he has to deny himself, pick up the cross and then follow me". What Jesus was showing is was quite the opposite of self-motivation. What Jesus was saying was that he went to the cross by fully subordinating his self will to God's will. His Resurrection was then the pay-off for that following God's will to that extent. Now because of the Resurrection, he is saying, that every Christ follower has that kind of Resurrection power. It is power to deny yourself and follow God. When God is in control of your life, then God's power will overflow through your life. This is the first kind of Resurrection power that kingdom citizens have.

Now that you have a "God powered self", there is a second kind of Resurrection power I want to bring to your attention. What happens when your "God powered self" is in a relationship with another being who has power over you? Now how are you to do God's will? This is the exact situation that Jesus was in when he was dragged in front of Pilot. When Pilot was questioning Jesus initially as you know Jesus kept silent. When Pilot became upset with Jesus, saying in [John 19:10](#) "Why don't you talk to me?" "Don't you

realize that I have the **power** to release you or crucify you?” Jesus replies, “You would have no **power** over me at all unless it were given to you from above.

When you examine this interaction closely you realize that Jesus was laying out something that is really fascinating that is true for every relationship. And that is that in a relationship, the person at the other end may have more power than you or less. Usually we get concerned when the other person has more power because we don't know how they are going to use their power and it might not be to your benefit. Now the human instinct is to go into fight mode with this other power. What Jesus was doing was fascinating. Jesus was recognizing that all power comes from God even the unbelieving Roman General Pilot's power. And it did not matter how he uses his power because God knows how to flip the outcome to his benefit, no matter what Pilot does. So you don't ever have to worry what other people who have power over you do with their power. And that thought should free you of all anxiety.

Consider it a great source of freedom and joy that the power that you do not have because someone else holds the power, is power doled out to them by God. And God gives power with the full knowledge of what will be done with it and how it will help his agenda in the end, even when that power is held by an agent of evil. That is what Jesus demonstrated by letting evil power do its thing and gaining a big victory out of it. When the sermon on the mount says “turn the other cheek” it is recognizing this very dynamic. God can turn evil intentions towards you for good. So rejoice kingdom people because even the power you don't have, the power given to others, even when used to do evil will be flipped by God to accomplish a great victory. When a martyr's blood is spilt 10 churches are birthed. When a servant of God is spat on and when love is returned, hearts are transformed. Such is the power of not fighting other people's power but staying true to your “God controlled self”. Even if a kingdom citizen is crucified, you will have your resurrection moment. So rejoice. Because kingdom people are not just

infused with God's power, but they have no need to fear the power of other people they interact with even when it is evil.

There is a third kind of power that is related to the second that bears mentioning. Sometimes you will get into situations where it will be that it is not people but circumstances that mess you up. It could be a natural calamity. Disaster that could strike that is nobody's fault really. Like the fire in the Notre Dame cathedral this past week. They say it was caused by a short circuit. Well, I want to say this. Because our God is sovereign over all circumstances, kingdom people need to treat those situations just as you would when dealing with an evil person like Pilate who was ready to crucify you. Psalm 112:7 says, "A righteous person does not fear bad news" So what does a righteous or "God controlled person" do in the face of bad news? The verse does on to say that such a person continues with a steadfast heart and trusts in the Lord.

Resurrection power is power over oneself, power to not be destroyed by evil and power to trust God even in the face of bad news.

Know this friends, the Resurrection was Jesus declaring victory over all his enemies. But through the Resurrection Jesus did not acquire some power he never had to begin with. You see because of His Resurrection, he was able to give His followers Resurrection power. Power to deny oneself and be God driven selves. Power to be true to oneself even in the face of evil. Power to trust God even when the circumstances are disastrous.

Apostle Paul says it perfectly in Phil 3:10. He says, ¹⁰*I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death,* ¹¹*so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!*

I bring the Resurrection power to your attention because too many Christ followers are ignorant of the power they have and so are unable to use it for his purposes. Or they may be cutting off access to this incredible power because of unrepentant sin. But there

is no point of believing in the Risen Christ and celebrating Easter, if we don't access the power of the Resurrection made available to us by Christ.

Friend's God has called you to participate in the most powerful kingdom on earth. When you are aware of your power you will be able to learn to use it. And when you use it, you will be able to further God's kingdom and in doing so accelerate the coming of our king.

This Resurrection Sunday, may we experience the power of Christ's resurrection in a new way and may it empower us to live our kingdom purpose in the year to come. Let us pray.