

The Start of a Brand New World

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday, April 12, 2020

The event that we celebrate today is so big and radical that it shakes our very core understanding of how life and death works. So I am going to begin by addressing the big picture view of the world from the Bible's perspective. You see when God first created the world, He created the garden of Eden and in that garden everything was designed to live forever. We don't even know today how such a world works, but in Gen 1 and 2 we are told that it worked perfectly and there is not one mention of death. In this perfect world, God had created a beautiful garden called the Garden of Eden. And in this garden, the eternal God could commune with eternal human beings made in His image. When sin entered the world however, human beings disconnected themselves from their guidance from God. When you disconnect from God, "moral errors" appear in the way one does things. The Bible calls this "sin". Now here is something to note about errors in general. Left unchecked, errors rapidly multiply quickly over time. Think of it this way. If you are shooting a target 50 feet away and aiming for the bulleye, now if your hand making the smallest error, say it is half a millimeter off. Then when the projectile is fired, and it has reached a foot away it is still just a tiny bit off the mark. But as the projectile moves forward, the deviation from where it should be grows rapidly. By the time it reaches the target, that initial error is now massive and it may not even make the target, let alone hit the bullseye. All errors left unchecked multiply greatly over time. The same with moral errors. You see it playing out in the first few chapters of Genesis. The first error of wanting to eat from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil is barely discernable as a negative thing unless you know the back story and know that it was something that God told them specifically not to do. But in a very short time, that error becomes blaming each other, and by the time to get to the next generation, that

moral error becomes Cain killing his brother Able. So what is God to do in such an error filled world? You see, God built a safety feature into this fallen world. It is called “death”. In Gen 3 you see it as the cherubim with their flaming swords guarding access to the Tree of Life. Death my friends was not a defect of this world. It was a feature God introduced as a way to stop run away sin because otherwise this world would be unsustainable.

But there is the problem with life that is also filled with death. The problem is that death terminates relationship. And God created human beings for relationship. And not just any kind of relationship, I am talking about an eternal relationship. But here is the deal, you can’t have eternal things in a universe that now has death built into it as a safety feature.

So what do you do? The Bible says God wants to make a whole new heaven and a whole new earth. In that new world there will not be death, but that is because there will not be the possibility of sin. This will be a world without errors or any kind. It will be a glorious, eternal world. This is only one part of what is coming. The second part though is that God also has to make a way to get finite death bound individuals like you and me into this brand new deathless universe. This is the task before God my friends. This is the task that Jesus Christ came to accomplish here on earth in this death-soaked world.

With that introduction, we are going to survey what Jesus did on Holy Week to accomplish the task He was given. I am only going to list 4 things. Firstly, he started the week by allowing Himself to be acknowledged as King and ruler of the Jews. That is like saying, he is King of all God’s chosen people. This is what Palm Sunday stands for. When we get to the last supper we see Him washing the feet of His disciples thus communicating what kind of followers he wants his people should be. After he acknowledges His kingship and teaches his followers a very important value, he does a third thing. He exposes the nature of evil. You see Jesus exposing evil in one of his

disciples who sells him out for 30 pieces of silver. You see His exposing evil when you see the hypocrisy of the Jewish people as they bay for His blood in place of Barabbas. You see Him exposing evil it in all the brutality of the cross by the Romans. Any follower of Jesus will also be able to see their own sin when they see what happened to Jesus on the cross. Only a truly innocent person can expose evil so universally. And with his perfect sinlessness, Jesus did an amazing job of exposing the evil of this world. But as a forth act, after exposing the evil, he takes the punishment for that evil on Himself. The punishment of all the people who ever lived and will ever live. Now taking on that level of punishment can only result in one thing and that is death. Thus on Good Friday, Jesus died after absorbing on Himself the punishment for us all.

As Jesus absorbs the punishment for sin though something else happens. You see sin accrues a debt to God. While God was keeping this world going, its debt to him was terribly high as well. Kind of like a credit card with a balance that has gone through the roof. Now God wanted to create a New World but to do that the debt of the old world had to be paid. A debt that could only be paid by someone without a debt of their own. That is why only a sinless one could die for the debts of this world. But when Jesus died on the cross, the debts of the whole world were paid off. This is what Good Friday was all about. Just Good Friday is an amazing event by itself.

But the story gets even better my friends. Once the old world's debt was taken care off God the Father was able to start creating a brand new world I referred to earlier. In this new world there won't be any sin. And because there is no sin, no death is necessary to prevent the effect of rapid runaway moral error. So no coronavirus for sure 😊 Now here is the even more fascinating part of this. Because this is a deathless world, it will take a brand new physical body with a whole new chemistry and biology going on inside to inhabit this brand new world. And because Jesus Christ is the one who paid the whole world's debt, He is also the one who gets to be the first to inherit this brand new kind of

body. This is the meaning of the title Jesus is given in Rev 1:4 when he is called the “first born from the dead”. And because this body does not see death, Jesus came back to life.

This my friends is a view of the mystery of Easter. With that I want us to take the Resurrection moment it with your imagination now. Matt 27 gives us a clue as to what this moment would have looked like. So Jesus’ body would have been laying in the tomb through Saturday. Then suddenly, on Sunday God the Father transforms it to this new body I spoke about and Jesus comes back to life. We also know that at this moment there are angels are there to minister to Him. We don’t know what all they did. Perhaps they must have folded His grave clothes. Then Jesus is ready to leave the grave. Now mind you Jesus at this point can walk through the gravestone just like that. Remember he has the power to walk through walls. Or He could roll the stone away Himself. Remember He is God with all of His Godlike powers. But His ministering angels are not to be denied their opportunity to serve Him. So they roll the stone away and Jesus walks out into the world to be presented to the old world as the first born of a new world. This is a dramatic moment! In worldly terms you may have seen press conferences of world leaders in the White House. There is a long corridor where the president walks down. At this point the doors are closed. But just as he reaches the door, the Sargent at Arms announces his name, the doors are opened by uniformed officers who salute him and the president then emerges unto the platform and into view. It is meant to be a dramatic moment. But it is nothing compared with what happened on Easter. But Jesus moment is also a little ironic. Because we don’t know of anybody who saw the moment Jesus emerges from the grave. None of his followers were there to witness this moment. In the Mathaen account of this story we are told that the guards at the tomb were dazzled at this dramatic moment and fell to the ground blinded. So even people who were right there when it happened did not see Jesus emerge. I believe God kept it that way because it was too great an event to be seen by human eyes then. And yet 2000 years later we are still talking about it. Which

other dramatic entry compares to this one! On Easter Sunday, Jesus was presented to the old world, as the first born of the new one.

While you visualize the scene and ponder its implications, I want to bring it back to us. Jesus promises that those who believe Him, and receive Him and spend their life getting to know Him will one day also get a body like Him. One that is fit for this brand new world without death. A world in which there is Jesus and all the saints but no sickness or tears or death. Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 15:50-51 puts it this way⁵⁰ ***What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.***

⁵¹ But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

My question to us this morning is, how does the amazing facts of Resurrection Sunday and the amazing promises to us impact our life today? I want to offer three quick things and stop.

First, if God can do what He did for Jesus, is there any challenge that happens here on earth too great for God to handle? Because of Easter, the answer is no. There is nothing too great for God to handle. Can I get an Amen! If you have something in your life that feels impossible or dead even and you have lost all hope, can God bring life into the dead things in your life? Because of Easter, the answer is yes my friends! When you don't see the plan and the way ahead is pitch dark, does God have a plan? Because of Easter, you and I can say with a resounding yes, God does have a plan forward. Just give

Him the steering wheel my friends. Just give Him the steering wheel and watch Him do wonders. Let us pray.