

Vindication!

1 John 1:1-4 Ephesians 1:17-23 John 20:19-29

April 16, 2023
Pastor Dave Bolte



The word **vindicate** means *to show or prove to be right, reasonable, or justified*. It has the idea of *substantiating, or demonstrating, that something is true*. The resurrection of Jesus Christ **vindicates** everything that Jesus said. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is such a grand and great miracle that it *shows, demonstrates, and proves* that Jesus' Word is true and that He will keep His promises. Because of this, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. The resurrection *shows* that Jesus is the One, True and Only God, and that you have eternal salvation by believing in His Name.

There were many times that Jesus made promises based on His upcoming resurrection.

JESUS IS GOD

Throughout the book of John, Jesus taught through Word and miracles that He was the Son of God, equal with the Father. At one point Jesus said this to the hostile Jews:

Jesus answered them, “*Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.*” They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple He had spoken of was His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples recalled what He had said. John 2:20-22

Even though the Jews destroyed His “Temple” -- that is, His body through crucifixion, He raised it from the dead on the Third Day. The resurrection **vindicated**, it *proved* that *He really is the Son of God*, equal to the Father.

That is what the whole story of Thomas is about; we heard it today in the gospel lesson. Once Thomas examined Jesus' risen body, and fully realized what had happened, He proclaimed on behalf of us all: “**My Lord and My God!**¹” The resurrection **vindicated**, it **proved** that **He really is the Son of God**, equal to the Father.

The resurrection continues to **prove** that Jesus is God. The resurrection shows that you are putting your faith in the right person; no one else has come back to life by His own power. Allah is not God; Buddha is not God; there is not a pantheon of gods for you to choose from. The only one to come back from the dead is Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God, equal to the Father! The resurrection **vindicates** Jesus; it **shows and proves** that He is the One, True, and Only God!

JESUS IS MESSIAH

In a similar way, the resurrection **proves** that Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited Savior of the Old Testament.

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” Jesus said, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as **Jonah** was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the **Son of Man** will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matt 12:38-40

Using the story of Jonah as an image of death and resurrection², Jesus' resurrection **proves** that He is the Messiah to come, the fulfillment of all the OT promises and prophecies. No one else can **predict** exactly how long he will be dead and exactly when he himself will rise from the dead. **BUT THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT JESUS DID.** In fact,

¹ Thomas has been maligned by those who tag him as “doubting Thomas”. In the storyline of the Gospel of John, he is given the highest point in the Gospel: the confession that the Risen Jesus is “Lord and God!” That storyline has been building throughout the Gospel, and finally, Jesus is recognized as “Lord and God” by Thomas after His resurrection from the dead. Rather than “doubting” Thomas, he is CONFESSING Thomas!

² Jonah was in the fish three days, as Jesus was in the tomb 3 days. Just as God delivered Jonah out of the fish on the third day, so too God delivered His Son out of death and the grave on the Third Day.

several times Jesus said He would rise from the dead on the Third Day. The “Sign of Jonah” – that is the resurrection -- **proves** that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, fulfillment of all the OT promises and prophecies, just as He said He was.

That is good news for us sinners . . . because it means that you have a Savior sent from God. Jesus is the One God promised to send for you who would bring peace and salvation. Jesus’ life and death; His perfect obedience and sacrificial death, rescues you from sin and its destruction. You have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ; and all the gifts of eternal salvation are freely given to you! Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament; He is the Savior, and His resurrection from the dead is meant to **prove** that to you!

JESUS GIVES ETERNAL LIFE

One of the things that the resurrection of Jesus Christ does is that it **vindicates** His promise to give you eternal life.

Jesus said, “Because I live, you also will live.” John 14:19
Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Jphn11:25-26

Jesus promised that He is **the resurrection and the life**, and **because He lives you also shall live**. These promises were made **before** He rose from the dead. His resurrection **proves** that He knew what He was talking about; it **vindicates** these promises so that you can put your faith in His promise of eternal life for you! He went first through death, and came out alive. So will you when its your turn to go through death – you will come out alive!

Through faith in Christ and His promises, you will not die in your sin, even though that is what we all deserve. By God's grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have been given eternal life! You have already crossed over from death to life! You will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven! The only way that this promise is true is because Jesus has

the power to do it! His own resurrection from the dead --- such a great and grand and majestic miracle --- *proves* that He has that power! It vindicates His promise! Believe His promise that He is *the resurrection and the life*, and that *because He lives you also shall live!*

JESUS GIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus also promised the giving of the Holy Spirit based on His resurrection.

Truly, truly, I say unto you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. John 16:7

Because Jesus has risen from the dead and returned to His Father in the Ascension, He has sent the Holy Spirit to His Church. That same Spirit was given to you in your Baptism. The Holy Spirit has created faith within you; He dwells in you and empowers you to live a holy and godly life. You are led by the Spirit and filled by Him. He strengthens your faith through Word and Sacrament, and motivates you to love God and serve your neighbor.

The giving of the Holy Spirit is connected with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Because Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, you have the Holy Spirit today!

The *Theology of the Resurrection* is that of vindication: It *proves, shows, and demonstrates* that

- ⇒ Jesus truly is the Son of God, equal to the father
- ⇒ Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the fulfillment of all the OT promises and prophecies, the Savior of the world
- ⇒ Jesus has the power to give you eternal life; you will survive death and escape the final judgment
- ⇒ and that He has sent the Holy Spirit to you who has given you faith and empowers you to live a holy life.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms – it vindicates -- that Jesus is true and His Word and promises are trustworthy! Amen!

Crucified and risen Savior of the world,

We thank you for telling us ahead of time about your resurrection, and thereby vindicating your words and promises.

Help us to trust in you as our God and Savior,

the one who gives us life and has sent us the Holy Spirit.

For your resurrection from the dead, we praise and thank you!

Amen.

1 John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Ephesians 1:17-23

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. **18** I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19** and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, **20** which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, **21** far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. **22** And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

John 20:19-29

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." ²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." ²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me?