



The Power of the Resurrection

Philippians 3:1-10, Luke 24:13-35

April 7, 2024

Pastor Dave Bolte

The **MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH** in the Christian faith is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that *Jesus is the Son of God*; that *His words are true and trustworthy*; and *that your sins have been paid for!*

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead *separates Christianity* from all the other world religions. The Resurrection *separates Jesus* from all other “prophets” and “gods”.

The Resurrection is the **cornerstone** on which the One, Holy, Christian, & Apostolic Church stands; and it is the **heart and core** of the preaching and teaching of the Christian Faith.

Because of the resurrection, you are **justified** and declared righteous¹!

The Resurrection points directly to the crucified and risen Jesus as the Savior of the world Who brings repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all people; just as He promised.

Here is how St. Paul expresses the significance of the resurrection:

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. 1 Corinthians 15:13-15

¹ Remember that both justified (Latin) and righteous (Greek) refer to the legal verdict God declares that you are “not guilty!” of your sins in His courtroom! This is the same verdict you hear every Sunday in absolution, and the same verdict you will hear on Judgment Day!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the most important truth in Christianity: Jesus, who was crucified, has risen from the dead! Salvation is found in Him alone! He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world!

For those who hear and believe the Easter Gospel, **it changes their life.** There is a spiritual power at work when you believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. St. Paul talked about the *Power of the Resurrection* today in this Scripture lesson:

I want to know Christ and the *power of His resurrection* and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Philippians 3:10-11

What does this “*Power of the Resurrection*” look like? The *power of the Resurrection* is seen in the Emmaus story that we heard today. Jesus appears as a mysterious traveler, and then reveals Himself as the crucified and risen Savior through His Word and the Meal. And those disciples are changed forever!

He does the same thing for us --- He reveals Himself through His Word and His Meal. The Emmaus story is a *dramatic, visual representation* of what happens in every one of our worship services. Christ is present with us as we hear His Word; and we eat His Sacramental Meal, Holy Communion. God’s Word and His Meal are Means of Grace; these are the places where Christ is present with us to create faith; He opens our eyes and we realize, know, and believe that He has risen from the dead! He works with us just like He worked in those two Emmaus disciples!

In the Emmaus story, the *Power of the Resurrection* is seen in 3 ways:

First, the resurrection creates **BURNING HEARTS.**

They asked each other, "Were not our *hearts burning* within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" Luke 24:32

The Words of Jesus and the Meal He gave them caused their hearts to *burn within them*. A “*burning heart*” is a way to describe faith; it’s a heart that *hears and recognizes* the truth of Jesus; a heart that *knows and believes* that

Jesus is alive; a heart that has *confidence* and *conviction* that Jesus is the Savior and that your sins are forgiven. The good news about Jesus creates a joy, a peace, and a comfort. The Emmaus disciples described it as a *burning heart within them*. The Lord “*opened their eyes*” and faith in Jesus was created through His Word and the Meal.

You have heard His Word and eaten His Meal many times. **Do you have a burning heart?** Do you have a confidence and conviction that Jesus really did rise from the dead and that your sins are forgiven? The Word and the Meal of Christ is what creates “*burning hearts*.”

A second way that you see the *Power of the Resurrection* at work in the Emmaus disciples is that it created **ZEAL**; they were so excited that it burst forth from them!

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. Luke 24:33

The newly created *zeal* within these disciples drove them to “*return at once*” to Jerusalem: that’s at least a 7 mile hike!

The *Power of the Resurrection* creates a zeal within you. There is

- there is an excitement about salvation;
- there is joy of knowing God through His Son Jesus
- there is a thankfulness for all Christ has done for you
- there is relief that your sins are forgiven
- And there is a passion, a zeal, to tell someone else about Jesus!

That's what happened with the Emmaus disciples. They felt compelled to tell the other disciples about the Risen Savior ... even if they had to walk another 7 miles to do it!

What about you? Do you have a “*zeal*” within you about Christ and His Resurrection? Is there a *passion* to worship the Lord? A *desire* to learn and study God's Holy Word? A *motivation* to serve other people? A *longing* for prayer? Does the forgiveness of your sins cause your heart to *burn in faith* and give you a *zeal* for Christ, His Word, and His Kingdom²?

² Of course, we do not shape our life on our feelings, nor does our salvation nor assurance depend on our feelings in any way whatsoever. But that does not mean that we deny and ignore the feelings that come with

A third thing that we see with the Emmaus disciples is that the power of the resurrection gave them a **BOLD WITNESS** to Jesus.

There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen" Luke 24:33-34

The third thing that the Resurrection does is that it makes you a bold witness. You have something very, very significant to tell others: "The Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead!" That is your message -- that message changes lives³!

Most people in your life have no idea who Jesus is or what He has done for them. What they know about Jesus comes from TV, movies, social media, or false teachers. The people in your life need someone who knows Christ and can speak the truth about Him. The *Power in the Resurrection* makes you a bold witness as you simply tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection for us and our salvation.

There is a *Power in the Resurrection*, a spiritual power that God works in and through you as you hear and believe **His Word**, and as you *take and eat*, and *take and drink* Christ's Body and Blood in **Holy Communion**⁴. That *Power in the Resurrection* was seen in the lives of those two disciples at Emmaus.

The *Power in the Resurrection* is seen in your life also: it creates a burning heart full of faith; it creates a zeal, love, and passion for Christ, His Word, and His Kingdom; and it enables you to be a bold witness to the people in your life so that you can confess that **Jesus Christ has risen from the dead!**
Amen!

faith. A burning heart and a zeal for Christ are proper responses to the Word of God and the Sacrament of Holy Communion at work in your life -- just as it was for the Emmaus disciples in Luke 24.

³ One of the saddest things I heard while in seminary was a professor who said, "Lutherans who do not share their faith in Christ because they really don't believe in Him themselves." **I hope that is not true!** What do you think? Why aren't Lutherans, who have the clearest confession of the gospel, known as evangelists?

⁴ **NO** exclusion of Holy Baptism is meant; I'm just working with the story in Luke 24 that focuses on the Word and the Meal. The same truths apply to Holy Baptism. In Baptism, you are given the Holy Spirit who is powerfully at work in your life to produce much fruit, such as, but not limited to: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. This is also part of the "power of the resurrection" in your life!

Lord Jesus, as you worked the
Emmaus disciples through Your
Word and Meal,

we ask that you also work in us
and create

burning hearts,

Christian zeal,

and a bold witness.

Send your Holy Spirit so that we
may know the power of the
Resurrection,

and live passionately engaged
lives as your people.

Amen!

Philippians 3:1-10

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. **2** Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh-- **4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. **7** But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Luke 24:13-35

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 He said to

them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

....