

THE NEWSLETTER

A Ministry of Cornerstone Fellowship of Coatesville Pennsylvania

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VOLUME 35, Number 4

APRIL 2016

DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Through the ages there have been many religious leaders making great claims for the religions which they founded. Some of the things which they have taught have been good. This fact has led many people to believe that all religions are of God. So it is often said that Christianity is just another religion in the families of faith and that if a person is sincere in any belief he will get to Heaven as surely as does the true believer in Christ.

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, THIS VIEW IS NOT TRUE. Christianity by its very genius declares that it is right and that all other religions are false. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave is the outstanding proof of the true character of Christianity and its claims.

Did Christ really rise from the dead? This is one of the most important questions in the world! If He did, then Christianity is the only true faith. It is God's responsibility to prove this to the world.

When the priesthood of Aaron was questioned (Numbers 17), God challenged the false priests, with Aaron, to put a dead, wooden rod in the place of worship overnight. In the morning Aaron's rod had miraculously budded, blossomed and bore fruit. By the giving of life out of death God silenced the pretenders and confirmed Aaron's divine appointment.

In like manner, God challenges all the founders of religious movements in the world to lay down their bodies in death and to prove their divine appointment by bodily resurrection. All have died and been buried. Christ alone came bodily out of the grave! Then during a period of forty days and nights He appeared to His disciples and at one time to 500 believers. The testimony of these many witnesses confirmed His resurrection.

This glorious fact transformed a group of discouraged and despondent disciples who had gone dejectedly back to their earthly tasks. They became a band of flaming evangelists who turned their world upside down by their preaching that Jesus Christ rose again from the grave. The existence of the Christian churches proves that He did rise from the dead. There would never have been a Christian movement had He remained buried.

Further, it has been demonstrated for 2000 years that when a person will believe in the heart and confess with the mouth that He died and rose again, these simple facts become the power of God unto salvation in his life. The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the church at Corinth, *I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he*

rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Multitudes have been completely transformed in a miraculous manner by the power of this Gospel, indicating conclusively that the body of our Lord does not lie in the tomb. He lives, and is today transforming lives. This proof is demonstrated constantly in the crucible of human experience. Every day in many places this fresh evidence can be observed.

Because He lives He has a claim on your life. He calls you to come with your sins and in simple faith to receive Him as your Savior.

The resurrected Christ said, ***Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me*** (Revelation 3:20).

THE CROSS

The following are some Scriptures that will help you understand the enormity of our Lord's sacrifice. Anytime is a good time to study these.

The Word of Indifference to the Cross - Matthew 27:39-40
The Word of Malice to the Cross - Matthew 27:41-43
The Word of Forgiveness from the Cross - Luke 23:33-34
The Word of Challenge to the Cross - Matthew 27:38-44 and Luke 23:39
The Word of Supplication to the Cross - Luke 23:40-42
The Word of Salvation from the Cross - Luke 23:43
The Word of Love from the Cross - John 19:25-27
The Word of Loneliness from the Cross - Matthew 27:46
The Word of Curiosity to the Cross - Matthew 27:47-49
The Word of Human Need from the Cross - John 19:28
The Word of Mockery to the Cross - Luke 23:36-37
The Word of Triumph from the Cross - John 19:30
The Word of Conviction to the Cross - Matthew 27:54 and Luke 23:47
The Word of Commitment from the Cross - Luke 23:46
Also read,
John 8:12; John 12:35, 36, 46 and Matthew 5:13-16

THIS IS THE GOSPEL

The greatest sermon ever preached by a Christian preacher is recorded in 1 Corinthians 15 and the first two verses of Chapter 16. St. Paul begins, "I declare unto you the gospel." That is the duty of every Christian. One may talk about history, discuss the events of the day, reveal his knowledge of great literature, and

of other things and be a wonderful person in every way, but it is only the gospel which really has power.

The word "gospel" comes from two Greek words which mean "good news," and that is what the gospel is. One may say that diphtheria is a bad disease. That would be true but it is not the gospel. But if one says there is a vaccine which prevents diphtheria or a medicine which cures it, then that would be good news.

To say that the world is bad may, in part, be true but it is not the gospel; likewise to say that a man is a sinner. But to proclaim the fact that there is a Savior that can make the world good and can redeem a man from his sins; that is the gospel. When the gospel is preached, it is a message of assurance and hope. It gives men a new faith, joy and peace. It can result in the salvation of a soul.

A very capable and highly respected scientist was telling about some of the new drugs that are available to help those who have a particular illness. We can thank God for what is being done in this field. However, that scientist also said "We will never discover any drugs that can bring peace to a human life such as the peace that can be found at the altar of the Lord Jesus Christ." The gospel does work wonders. Take, for example, a man who was bankrupt both financially and in his life. The courts had taken what he had to apply to his debts and in his heart he felt only despair. He started going to a church that used as its theme, "Only believe, only believe, all things are possible, only believe." The sermons proclaimed the gospel that no man is hopeless; that there is a solution to every problem. These great truths began to take hold of that man's mind. He made a new start. Now, he has paid off every cent he owed, and he has a good life.

There are countless stories of those who were heavily burdened by a load of guilt. They knew they had done wrong and felt bitter remorse. Then they heard the true gospel of forgiveness, believed, accepted its truths, met the conditions and found that their sins were taken away, the guilt removed and a new chance was theirs.

When the gospel is preached it has great power. It always does good. Here then is the gospel message as presented in 1 Corinthians 15

CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS

The Christian gospel begins with that fact. Leave that out and nothing is left. First, we remind ourselves that Jesus believed in something strong enough to die for it. That ought to be an example to every Christian.

Also, His death on the cross was a revelation of God's love. And as Jesus was on the cross, man could see something of the love which is eternally burning in the heart of God. But the death of Christ on the cross meant more. Something happened that day, some mighty deed was accomplished which forever makes a difference in man's relationship with God. We sing, "What can wash away our sins?" and we answer, "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." We cannot explain it, but we believe and experience it through faith.

CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD

That is the second great truth of the gospel. Man had done his worst. We recall those shameful trials, the march up Calvary, Jesus being stripped, nails driven through his flesh, the ridicule of the crowd and His death. Then God took over. The earth began to shake, the soldiers guarding the tomb became as dead

men, an angel came and rolled the stone away, life came into the burying place, and the conqueror of death came striding down the garden path at sunrise.

God is not powerless. Man cannot finally defeat God's plans and purposes. God did give to man a free will and sometimes man does do terrible things, but after man has gone his limit, God can and does act. Man cannot destroy God. And the gospel proclaims the fact of a living, reigning Christ.

CHRIST DIED, CHRIST LIVES – those are the first two foundations of the Christian gospel.

WE, TOO, SHALL LIVE

Man shall live beyond death, also. The Apostle declares: *O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory...thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Christian faith is never so triumphant as in the hour of death. With other faiths death is a blind alley to oblivion or, at best, a speculation of a hope that there is life beyond. But because of the fact of Christ's resurrection, Christians are certain and sure of their own eternal life.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

We should be loyal to it. The Apostle said, *Therefore, my brethren, be steadfast unmovable.*

When one enters into the fellowship of Christ for the real and true reason, belief in the Christian gospel, he will never allow anything to separate him from that fellowship. And he will keep growing and growing as he fixes his eyes on the Lord.

BLOOD DRIVE REPORT

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and donate blood at our recent blood drive. Our goal was 42 units. We collected 56 units!!

God bless you for giving this gift of life. THANKS TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU WHO TOOK THE TIME TO BE A LIFESAVER! And to our volunteers as well and those who made homemade goodies. Our donors say we have the best refreshments around. You did a GREAT job! Watch for our next blood drive on THURSDAY, July 28, 2016. We will need your help to make our drive a success!

THE RESCUE MISSION

The film *Saving Private Ryan* dramatized the rescue of a U.S. Army paratrooper in World War II. Three of Private James Ryan's brothers had been killed in battle, leaving only the young soldier to carry on his family's name. Captain John Miller and his squad rescued Private Ryan in a feat that cost the captain and several of his men their own lives. Many gave their lives to save one.

Two thousand years ago, God Himself embarked on a rescue mission. He sent his one and only Son into a world that had lost its way. Jesus came in human form with a simple but vitally important mandate – to seek and to save a lost human race (Luke 19:10).

This rescue mission was not an afterthought on God's part. It was God's eternal plan. It was His purpose from eternity past that Christ would come to save us.

Down through the centuries, passover lambs had pointed toward Jesus and His once-for-all sacrifice for sin. When He arrived,

with resolute purpose, He accomplished the Father's plan by His death and resurrection. Rescue is now available to any and all who place their trust in Him. One died to save many.

May you be strengthened, encouraged, challenged and changed by the realization that God's eternal plan was to save YOU! May His rescue gain fresh new meaning as you think on His mercy and grace.

TWO THIEVES

Crucifixion was torture. Leather straps or spikes were used to hang a condemned man on a pole. Like a helpless animal tangled in a barbed wire fence, the victim could survive for days with excruciating pain. Death usually came by suffocation when, hanging by his hands, the victim lost the strength to draw another breath.

Three men on three trees

In the Spring of AD 33, the crucifixion of three men, outside the city walls of Jerusalem, changed the course of world history. Roman executioners hammered nails through the wrists and ankles of three men and left them to die. The event itself was common in the ancient Mid East. And yet, 2,000 years later, the world still talks about those three deaths.

The explanation of the significance of those deaths was written on the flyleaf of an old Bible. In words that are memorable, someone had written, "One man died with guilt in him and on him. A second man died with guilt in him but not on him. The third man died with guilt on him but not in him." What a profoundly simple description of some differences we all need to understand.

One died with sin in him and on him

He was the first of two thieves executed that day. By the law of the land he was given the punishment he deserved. He was sentenced and condemned.

The first thief seems to have died an angry man. He may have been angry with himself for getting caught. He was likely angry with the judge who sentenced him. He was probably angry with all those who had let him down along the way. He seems to have been especially angry with the man named Jesus who hung innocently at his side.

The thief wasn't alone in his contempt for Jesus. Others shared his feeling. It was easy to be furious with someone who claimed to be the light and hope of the world – then hung like a common criminal, not even saving Himself from death.

Angry with Jesus for being unable to help Himself or anyone else (Luke 23:39), the first thief died with his own sin in him and on him.

One died with sin in him but not on him

There was a second thief executed that day. At first he joined the others who ridiculed and insulted Jesus. For a while he too mocked Jesus with the challenge to save Himself and them if He really was the promised Messiah (Matthew 27:37-44).

As the darkness closed in, however, the second thief had a change of heart. Turning to the first thief, he said, "Don't you fear God since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-

43).

That may be one of the most important conversations ever recorded. These few words show what the rest of the New Testament declares. Forgiveness of sins and eternal life are given to anyone who trusts Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Nothing more. Nothing less. Faith alone in Christ alone determines our eternal destiny (John 3:16-18; Acts 16:31; Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

The second thief had no time to clean up his life. He had no time to do anything but to believe in Jesus. In the process, he gave all of us a picture of what it takes to come into the eternal family of God.

In response to the simplest expression of faith Jesus assured him of forgiveness. The second thief died with sin in him but not on him. The Judge of the heavens lifted the guilt from the second thief's shoulders, placing it instead on Jesus, our sin-bearer.

One died with sin on him but not in him

Jesus shouldered the guilt of the world that day. He died with the weight of the world's sin on Him but not the slightest wrong in Him.

Three days later He rose from the dead to show that His death, tragic as it was, was not a mistake. With a nail-scarred, resurrected body Jesus gave hundreds of His disciples all the evidence they needed to believe that He had taken their place in death. The judgment of God had fallen on Him instead of on us.

What is amazing is that this is our story, too. We were there. We were there because God was there in our place, bearing our sins. We were also there because all of us will respond either as the first thief or as the second.

The words don't make the difference; the faith does. "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

BAPTISMAL SERVICE

We rejoice with those who followed the Lord Jesus through the waters of believer's baptism on **Sunday, March 20.**

Jeanne Bergstig

Julia Burns

Allan Cunningham

Cheryl Cunningham

Cody Cunningham

Ashley Davidson

Douglas Davidson

Marilyn Davidson

Victoria Gilbert

Taylor Gustafson

Skylar Main

Aidan Ross

Landyn Sampa

Jennifer Scott

If you have made the decision to follow Christ and you would like to be baptized, what a wonderful day it will be for you. It's not TOO LATE! Speak to Dr. Jensen as soon as possible, if you would like to be baptized.

LADIES NIGHT OUT

The annual event for LADIES at Cornerstone is scheduled for Monday, May 16. **DISCOVERING GOD'S TREASURES** is this year's theme. Every woman is invited to participate in this exciting evening. Watch for tickets to go on sale SOON!

IRON SHARPENS IRON MEN'S EVENT

Please continue to pray for the men who will be attending the *Iron Sharpens Iron* event on Saturday, April 16 **MEN!** Your cost of \$65 is NOW DUE! Please make your check payable to Glen Warren. You can still sign up to attend and don't forget to give Glen your t-shirt size!

THE WORDS OF THE CROSS

Even in dying, Jesus Christ was teaching us how to live. The seven recorded statements from the cross give us seven profound lessons on life.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). **Forgiveness is better than revenge!**

"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). **Faith is rewarded with promise!**

"Woman, behold your son!... Behold your mother!" (John 19:26-27). **Our own needs should not overshadow the needs of others!**

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34). **Anything that could jeopardize our relationship with God should produce anguish!**

"I thirst" (John 19:28). **These words, spoken to fulfill prophecy, remind us of the authority of Scripture!**

"It is finished" (John 19:30). **Do not let yourself lose sight of your goal of doing God's will!**

"Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23:46). **In your suffering, entrust yourself to God!**

THREE CROSSES

Three crosses stood on Calvary's hill. Jesus did not die alone. He died as he had lived – in the midst of sinners. The scriptures tell us that they took Jesus, bearing his own cross, to the place called the "hill of the Skull." There they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side.

Perhaps it was in jest. Perhaps it was an intended insult. Perhaps it was an accident of fate that prompted them to hang our Lord between two sinners. But, it was a most appropriate act. The entire ministry of Christ was spent in the midst of sinners. Wherever he went, he sought out sinners. He ate with them. He talked with them. Now, even in death he is not separated from them. He, who was dying for sinners, was dying with sinners.

This scene with its three crosses clawing into the threatening and terrifying sky of Calvary is symbolic of three facts of the Christian faith.

First, death is inevitable. Like the two criminals dangling in dreadful pain, we are all condemned to death. The one certainty of life is death. When we are young we might laugh at death, risk life, and dare courageously. But as we grow older, laughter in the face of death is not the sign of courage, instead madness. At best, it is the artificial make-up smile on the face of a clown which hides our honest fears. Deep down inside all of us – down in the very depths of self, we know the dark, demonic dread of dying.

Death is inevitable. It may not be on a cross. It may not be with suffering and pain. It may come without feeling or our conscious knowledge. It may be sudden like a flash of lightning. It may be silent like the last moments of consciousness before sleep. It may be violent like the clash of steel against cold steel. *But... it will come!*

The second fact of faith reflected by this scene of Calvary is that death is deserved. Our death is unique. We die, not like animals.

Their death is natural. It is the pattern of their creation. They die without clinging to the memories of the past or grasping for the unfulfilled hopes of the future. We, however, were created for immortality. We were created in the image of God. But our imaginations blur the image and our ambition distorts it. We eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. We leap to be as tall as God and fall. We work exclusively for self and are paid the wages we deserve – death.

It is an easy thing to act good. It is an easy thing to do good. BUT, it is an impossible thing to BE good. Who can dare to bare their heart to God? Who can stand before the only God who tears away our false pretenses and sees us for what we really are – who can stand before this God and say, "I am innocent. I deserve more than death?" Particularly is this a frightening situation in the light of the standard of righteousness which Christ brings to light. To lust is to commit adultery. To hate is to kill. To think first of self is to place God last and least of all. Before such a standard who shall stand? We are all guilty – if not by deeds of hands then by thoughts of mind and heart we are betrayed. Death is inevitable. Death is deserved.

The drama of Calvary is not over. A spark of hope glows in the darkened dusk of tragedy. Our Lord lifts his eyes to the Father from whom he had come and shouts "It is finished!" These are the words used by a runner as he is first to cross the finish line. These are the words of the boxer having delivered a knockout blow to his opponent. These are the words of a warrior as he sees his enemy throw down his arms and surrender. "It is finished." Our Lord has confronted death on its own grounds and defeated it. Between two sinners hangs the Savior. His supreme sacrifice of suffering and humiliation has been at the same time his exaltation and glorification. And as we share in his death, we share his victory!

This is the third fact of faith carved indelibly into the rocks of Calvary – in the act of dying, the certain death that we deserve, we are given life. The same three crosses, which convince us of the reality of death, redeem us and give us new life because these three crosses are yours, and mine, and HIS. Therefore, catch the vision of the cross that stands between your cross and mine. See beyond the blood, and thorns and the rusty nails, and catch the vision of a new life born in death, a victory won in defeat. Because there are three crosses on Calvary – yours, and mine, and his – we can now truly call this dark day of Friday "Good."

ECHOES OF MY HEART CD RELEASE CONCERT



Come to the church on Saturday, April 9 at 7pm to celebrate the release of KINDRED CROSS's newest CD, *Echoes of My Heart*.

Let's support Steve and the band by our prayers and attendance. It will be an uplifting and inspirational evening. Invite your friends & family to join you here for this special treat!

MOVIE NIGHT

Save the date – Saturday, April 30 – Come to the church at 6:30pm to see **WAR ROOM**.

This film is being shown by *Family Christian* in Exton in preparation for National Day of Prayer, Thursday, May 5.

Invite your family, friends, neighbors & co-workers to join you **HERE!**



April 30, 6:30pm

Cornerstone Fellowship

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FREE ADMISSION