

Victory of the Lamb – Easter 2019

Luke 24:28-32 Jesus Changes Everything - Pastor Bill Limmer

Have you ever forgot where you parked your car? It is one thing, if you get disoriented walking out of Pic-n-Sav and you wonder where your car is, but when it is Christmas time and you are at the mall and it is cold and you can't remember, well that sucks. You are left to go up and down the rows, and shockingly and suddenly there are numbers of cars that end up looking a lot like yours. Do you ever use your key remote to try and get your horn to blare? I thank God for that option. And what about when you are looking for your car and someone sees you walking with your packages and they start to follow because they don't know that you are lost, and they want your parking spot. Ahh, the walk and look of shame. The price of forgetfulness.

This morning we are going to meet a couple of guys who were on their own walk of emptiness, fear, grief, hurt, and pain all because they forgot Jesus' promise that he would come back to life.

Luke 24:13 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; . . . 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. . . 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. . . ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. ²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on 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. ³² 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?" The greatest even in history, Jesus comeback to life from death.

In the last couple of weeks we have experienced some amazing comebacks in the field of sports. Two weeks ago, Virginia won the NCAA basketball title after being the first number 1 seed in history to lose to a number 16 seed the year before. Last Sunday, 14 years after his last Masters win Tiger Woods roared and won the Masters golf championship. Last Monday, the Los Angeles Clippers were getting destroyed by the Golden State Warriors only to comeback from 31 points, the largest deficit in NBA playoff history to steal victory from the hands of defeat. That's all cool stuff but did you catch what I read about Jesus. Jesus was crucified, died but is now alive. Coming back from death to life, sorry that makes a sports win really weak.

Jesus came back to life. He is alive. (Blog from Pastor James Hein) "Here is what people know: the evidence that virtually every historian (90%+) Christian or otherwise, actually agree upon: 1) There was a real Jesus of Nazareth who died by crucifixion early in the first century because, from the Jewish leaders' perspective he was guilty of blasphemy, and from the Romans' perspective he was leading an insurrection. (The writings of Roman historian Tacitus and Jewish historian Josephus, both non-

Christians, confirm these points.) Following Jesus' death, his tomb, which had been guarded by Roman soldiers, was found empty." To crush the new movement all anyone needed to do was to produce his body but they couldn't because he was not there. Jesus is alive. Keep in mind his disciples believed they witnessed his bodily resurrection both as individuals and in group settings. And they were transformed. They went from fearing for their life behind locked doors to being bold in their witness to the resurrection even in front of those who put Jesus to death. "In addition, Significant skeptics, like Jesus' brothers "(I mean think about that, trying to convince your siblings that you are God – right) "and Saul of Tarsus, a notorious persecutor of the church. They all flipped from unbelievers to believers, and were so convinced that they too were willing to die for that belief."

Jesus significant impact on history is undeniable. He changed the day that people worshiped from Saturday to Sunday or any day. Time has changed because of him. Many of us grew in with the initial AD, Latin for "in the year of the Lord." Now people are calling it the CE – Common Era, but it all goes back to Jesus. Jesus has had a tremendous impact on art (consider the Cathedral of Notre Dame), science, government, and human rights. Maybe you didn't know that or maybe you have forgotten but it all goes back to Jesus and his resurrection!

For Christians Jesus is alive but we often forget to let that truth transform our lives. We walk around in guilt and shame over our sin. Don't forget you are forgiven so you can get the burden off your back and live in joy. Ephesians 1:7 **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.** Ever feel your sin is too much. Remember Jesus.

Sometimes we try to face temptation on our own instead of relying on Jesus in those temptations. And we crumble and fall into stinking thinking, and all other kinds of sin. When tempted remember this: Hebrews 4:15-16 **we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.** ¹⁶ **Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.** What I try to do, and I am not perfect, but what I try to do is realize that Jesus is standing between me and whatever is tempting me. It is his power that enable me to say no temptations. Tuesday morning as was lying in bed with seemingly 14 trillion things to do. I was overwhelmed, fear, and worry. And then God reminded me, I don't have to do any of it by myself. I'm not alone. Jesus is with me. Jesus is with you too. He said to you, Matthew 28:20 **Surely I will be with you always.**

Sometimes Christians forget Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of grace and not rules and regulations. Sometimes Christians want people to act a certain way before they share love with them. Oops. That is not good. Since Jesus is alive you can expect that Jesus has a joyful welcome for the least likely. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene who was once demon possessed but now a delivered woman. Being a woman in that day would mean she would have no social standing but Jesus welcomes the outlier. Jesus is the first world leader to inaugurate a kingdom for those of little value, the poor, meek, social rejects, the criminals, the wrong people, the losers, those who have failed: failed in finances, parenting, relationships, school, time management, love and life. In the forty days after his resurrection Jesus spent time finding his friends and restoring those who had betrayed, denied, him, doubted him. If you aren't very good at being good, if you have forgotten – welcome to Jesus' kingdom of grace. Ephesians 2:8,9 **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast**

In the reading we had Jesus in his love is walking with two people who were walking away from him. He shared an amazing Bible study with them and then it clicks. They said **“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”** They showed the transformation and ran back to Jerusalem in the dark, the very reason why they had left Jerusalem in the first place was to get home before it was dark because of the criminals. But now they are back out in the dark on purpose because their life is transformed. Jesus loves to meet people where they are at even if they are walking away from him. Jesus comes along side even those who have lost their faith – some of you needed to hear that today. Titus 3:5 **He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.**

Jesus not only welcomes and restores but also extends an invitation to eternal life. Over the course of the last 100 years the life span of people in the US has basically doubled. But some things haven't changed. We still have behaviors that are motivated by the fear of death. We do our best to ignore it or to hide from death, but it is in every hospital and every funeral home and one day it will knock on our home door as well. Today we are in a medical and scientific sprint to find the cure of death so we can live forever. This past week I heard a story of a man who kept having blood transfusions. The blood came from men younger than him. He was trying to cheat death. We try to heal the world through legislation, charity work and so we donate to various causes. Legislation, charity, science are all great but they aren't the answer to physical death, let alone spiritual death, Jesus is. Jesus paid the penalty for sin and rose again because when there is no sin there is no death so he came alive. Because Jesus is alive, you have hope not only for today but for eternity: **Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.**

Paul, a former scoffer of the resurrection and a former persecutor of those who believed in the resurrection ended up saying: **For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.** 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 The problem isn't whether Jesus resurrection is real, because it is. Our issue is you and me living like he is. Jesus invites you to come for the first time to him or to come back again and receive him. For where Jesus is there is power, strength, meaning, joy, love, hope and victory. It is Easter Sunday and because Jesus is alive, your victory starts now.