

“The Power of the Resurrection”

Scripture: John 11:25-26 “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Introduction:

Jeremy was born with a twisted body, a slow mind and a chronic, terminal illness that had been slowly killing him all his young life. Still, his parents had tried to give him as normal a life as possible and had sent him to St. Theresa's Elementary School.

At the age of 12, Jeremy was only in second grade, seemingly unable to learn. His teacher, Doris Miller, often became exasperated with him. He would squirm in his seat, drool and make grunting noises. At other times, he spoke clearly and distinctly, as if a spot of light had penetrated the darkness of his brain. Most of the time, however, Jeremy irritated his teacher. One day, she called his parents and asked them to come to St. Teresa's for a consultation.

As the Forresters sat quietly in the empty classroom, Doris said to them, "Jeremy really belongs in a special school. It isn't fair to him to be with younger children who don't have learning problems. Why, there is a five-year gap between his age and that of the other students!"

Mrs. Forrester cried softly into a tissue while her husband spoke. "Miss Miller," he said, "there is no school of that kind nearby. It would be a terrible shock for Jeremy if we had to take him out of this school. We know he really likes it here."

Doris sat for a long time after they left, staring at the snow outside the window. Its coldness seemed to seep into her soul. She wanted to sympathize with the Forresters. After all, their only child had a terminal illness. But it wasn't fair to keep him in her class. She had 18 other youngsters to teach and Jeremy was a distraction. Furthermore, he would never learn to read or write. Why waste any more time trying?

As she pondered the situation, guilt washed over her. "Oh God," she said aloud, "here I am complaining when my problems are nothing compared with that poor family! Please help me to be more patient with Jeremy."

From that day on, she tried hard to ignore Jeremy's noises and his blank stares. Then one day he limped to her desk, dragging his bad leg behind him. "I love you, Miss Miller," he exclaimed, loudly enough for the whole class to hear. The other children snickered, and Doris' face turned red. She stammered, "Wh-Why, that's very nice, Jeremy. Now please take your seat."

Spring came, and the children talked excitedly about the coming of Easter. Doris told them the story of Jesus, and then to emphasize the idea of new life springing forth, she gave each of the children a large plastic egg. "Now," she said to them, "I want you to take this home and bring it back tomorrow with something inside that shows new life. Do you understand?"

Yes, Miss Miller!" the children responded enthusiastically - all except for Jeremy. He just

listened intently, his eyes never left her face. He did not even make his usual noises. Had he understood what she had said about Jesus' death and resurrection? Did he understand the assignment? Perhaps she should call his parents and explain the project to them. That evening, Doris' kitchen sink stopped up. She called the landlord and waited an hour for him to come by and unclog it. After that, she still had to shop for groceries, iron a blouse and prepare a vocabulary test for the next day. She completely forgot about phoning Jeremy's parents.

The next morning, 19 children came to school, laughing and talking as they placed their eggs in the large wicker basket on Miss Miller's desk. After they completed their Math lesson, it was time to open the eggs. In the first egg, Doris found a flower. "Oh yes, a flower is certainly a sign of new life," she said. "When plants peek through the ground we know that spring is here." A small girl in the first row waved her arms. "That's my egg, Miss Miller," she called out.

The next egg contained a plastic butterfly, which looked very real. Doris held it up. "We all know that a caterpillar changes and grows into a beautiful butterfly. Yes that is new life, too" Little Judy smiled proudly and said, "Miss Miller, that one is mine."

Next Doris found a rock with moss on it. She explained that the moss, too, showed life. Billy spoke up from the back of the classroom. "My Daddy helped me!" he beamed.

Then Doris opened the fourth egg. She gasped. The egg was empty! Surely it must be Jeremy's, she thought, and, of course, he did not understand her instructions. If only she had not forgotten to phone his parents. Because she did not want to embarrass him, she quietly set the egg aside and reached for another.

Suddenly Jeremy spoke up. "Miss Miller, aren't you going to talk about my egg?" Flustered, Doris replied, "but Jeremy - your egg is empty!" He looked into her eyes and said softly, "Yes, but Jesus' tomb was empty too!"

Time stopped. When she could speak again. Doris asked him, " Do you know why the tomb was empty?"

"Oh yes!" Jeremy exclaimed. "Jesus was killed and put in there. Then his Father raised him up!"

The recess bell rang. While the children excitedly ran out to the school yard, Doris cried. The cold inside her melted completely away.

Three months later Jeremy died. Those who paid their respects at the mortuary were surprised to see 19 eggs on top of his casket, all of them empty.

Transitional Statement:

We have been talking a lot about the power of Christ in the book of Ephesians. Around the death of Jesus there had been doubt, fear and wondering just how to go on by His disciples. But, His death represented a new beginning....NEW LIFE

What does the empty tomb tell us today?

Lesson:

I. First, the empty tomb declares the Resurrection of Christ from the dead

- A. Joseph of Arimathea had placed him in a new tomb
- B. The Jews had went with the Roman guard to secure the tomb
- C. Guard was placed there (Matt 27:62-66)
 - With loss of life if not guarded properly
 - A seal was placed on the tomb (Pilates ring stamp)
- D. Basically the Jews made sure he was in there and that there was no way for his body to be stolen.
 - *Bless there pea picking hearts they forgot about the potential for God to raise him from the dead
- E. Jesus was raised from the dead

Matt 28:1-10 "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. 5 The angel said to the women, " Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. 7 "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

8 And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, " Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."

II. From the empty tomb the resurrection of Christ declares Him is the Son of God

- A. From the beginning of time until Jesus there had been many important men that God had used in might ways.
 - 1. Abraham
 - 2. Moses
 - 3. Elijah
 - 4. Isaiah
 - 5. Jeremiah
 - 6. John the Baptist
- B. Without the resurrection Jesus would have joined this long list of faithful servants.
- C. But, the resurrection was a declaration from heaven
 - God's way of announcing with power that Jesus was the Christ and His only begotten son.
 - READ Romans 1:3-4
- D. Brethren, the resurrection morning was special, because there at that tomb:
 - Although under heavy Roman guard
 - Although sealed

-Although bound like a mummy
*God raised Jesus from the dead

*Proclaiming Jesus to be His Son with Power

III. From the empty tomb the resurrection of Christ proclaims salvation

A. Read

1 Peter 3:21-22 “Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.”

*Our salvation comes through the resurrection of Christ

B. Paul places it in the heart of the gospel

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,”

Romans 6:3-5 “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,”

C. Salvation and resurrection go hand in hand

-Its good news

IV. From the Empty tomb the resurrection of Christ is the base of our hope.

A. 1 Peter 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

B. The sad thing is there are people who feel hopeless

C. There are people who hope in the wrong things.

D. But, we hold our hope in the resurrection of Christ.

-A living hope

E. In 1 Cor. 15

A. The Sadducees were saying there is no resurrection from the dead.

B. To which Paul answers If Christ was not raised from the dead THEN:

1. We are false witnesses 1Cor. 15:15
1. Our message is worthless
2. Your faith is worthless 1Cor. 15:17
3. You still lost in your sins 1Cor. 15:17

4. Eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die 1Cor. 15:32
5. You would just be baptized for a dead guy 1 Cor. 15:29

- * If our hope has only been in this life we are above all men to be most pitied. 1Cor. 15:19

C. The fact is he was raised from the dead 1 Cor 15:5-8

*Our hope isn't in a dead Lord but a Living Savior

V. And From the Empty tomb the resurrection of Christ has swallowed up death and give us the victory.

- A. 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. 55 " O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"

- B. Christ went to the realm of the dead where the gates only swing inward and He came out and broke the hinges. Dead lost its power on resurrection morning.

- C. Christ has the power over death

VI. The attempted cover up Matt 28:11-15

- A. The Jews tried to get people to believe that someone came and stole the body and its really no wonder that they have found some coffin of sorts with the inscription Jesus on the outside that would fit the cover up.

- B. Satan still doesn't want us to talk about this matter today.

Conclusion:

Jeremy looked at an empty egg and was reminded of life that comes from the risen savior.

I wonder if we don't try to keep Jesus in the tomb sometimes. Its sure easier to live our lives without the pressure and responsibility that a risen Savior brings.

What has power over you today? Fear....job....sport.....or the Resurrection of Christ. Today you can have a new life in Christ by being baptized into His death, burial and resurrection and raised to walk in newness of life.