

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ (4/17/22)

Sermon Description: Fleming Rutledge has said, “The key to Jesus is now, as it has always been, his crucifixion and resurrection.” This Easter Sunday we will read accounts of both. We will also ask the question, “Where would we be if it wasn’t for the cross and resurrection?” And we will celebrate the one that though he died, behold, he lives!

Main Passage: Matthew 28:1-10

Title: **The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ**

Topics: Holidays/Events > Easter

Tags: crucifixion, death, resurrection, life, trauma, healing, grace, Easter

Questions to consider:

- Where would you be if it wasn’t for the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
- Do you believe that Jesus—not trauma, or sin, or pain, or death, but Jesus—gets the final say?

Easter Sunday

Introduction: The time I went to Easter Sunday and the preacher didn’t preach about Easter. ☺

The cross and resurrection of Jesus are PARAMOUNT. On Easter, yes. But, truly, for the Christian, they are central to our lives every day of the year.

The inner criterion of whether or not Christian theology is Christian lies in the crucified Christ... the cross is the test of everything.

Jürgen Moltmann
German theologian
The Crucified God, page 7

The key to Jesus is now, as it has always been, his crucifixion and resurrection.

Fleming Rutledge
American Episcopal priest, author, and preacher
The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ, page 29

So, today we’ll examine accounts of both his crucifixion and resurrection. There is no desire to be novel but rather bring forth with utmost care and clarity the importance of these Easter events.

Matthew 27:31–55

³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. ³²As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). ³⁴There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴²“He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” ⁴⁴In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. ⁴⁵From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). ⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” ⁵⁰And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵²and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. ⁵⁴When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!” ⁵⁵Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs.

Consider the various reactions, including the calls for Jesus to save himself or anticipation to see if we would be saved from death.

And it’s clearly the case that Jesus did not seek to save himself from death but rather save all of us through his death.

The cross can mean MANY things. But it cannot mean less than the following two statements provided by Rutledge:

- (1) There is sin and guilt for which atonement needs to be made.*
- (2) There is slavery, bondage, and oppression from which humankind needs to be delivered.*

Rutledge, page 216

For the cross to fail in addressing sin/guilt and slavery/bondage/oppression is to empty the cross of its power. The crucified Christ deals squarely with our need to be forgiven. In other words, we need our sin covered—to have it atoned for—and no longer held against us. The cross of Christ does that.

It also delivers us. It brings an end to our captivity to sin. In other words, sin is no longer our master. We are given new life and new hope and new power and new peace. We no longer live for ourselves but for Christ who provides us a new life.

For whatever reason, there can be a proclivity to not centralize the cross. Perhaps the gruesomeness, bloodiness, and horror associated with the cross do not square with our modern sensibilities. We can make the mistake of moving too quickly from the cross to the empty tomb. Consider this quote.

The propensity of religions [is] to avoid suffering:
to have light without darkness,
vision without trust and risk,
hope without an ongoing dialogue with despair—
in short, Easter without Good Friday.

Douglas John Hall, emeritus professor of theology
McGill University in Montreal, Quebec
God and Human Suffering

For the Christian, let it be heard this morning: **1 Peter 2:24** ²⁴“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

So, I ask, where would we be if it wasn't for the cross?

Now, turning to the resurrection...

Matthew 28:1–10

¹After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” ⁸So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

There is a great lyric we sing each Easter Sunday.

Death in vain forbids him rise

Death says to Jesus, “Stay there. Stay dead. I forbid you to rise.” And death says those words in vain. Death cannot hold Jesus. Death in futility says to Jesus, “Just stay dead.” And death was not strong enough. **Death could not restrain him and the tomb could not contain him.**

Romans 6:9–10

⁹For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Though great our sins and sore our woes His grace much more aboundeth

Though great our sins. What are your sins this morning? And how great are they? If your sin is small, then Jesus will appear small, maybe even unnecessary. But if you understand your sin to be great and grievous, then Christ will appear great to you, even precious. And we need to hear this morning that no matter how great and grievous our sins, his grace much more aboundeth. His grace doesn't barely cover. It aboundeth.

And sore our woes. What are your woes this morning? How sore are you? If your woes are able to be overcome with money or love or substance (as)use or title or work or travel, then Jesus will appear small, maybe even unnecessary. But if you understand your woes to be great and without human balm, then Christ will appear great to you, even precious. And we need to hear this morning that no matter how great and sore our woes, his grace much more aboundeth. His grace doesn't barely cover. It aboundeth.

At this point, on account of the resurrection, it would be erroneous to say that the resurrection fixes everything here and now. No more sins and no more sore woes. That's not the promise of the resurrection for today. Some day. Just not today.

Consider how Jackie Hill Perry talks about the place the resurrection has in her life, specifically in dealing with past sexual abuse and trauma.

Trauma makes you inquisitive. It makes you doubt everything and everybody. It makes you squint your eye at the familiar, rummage through your memories, and project what you gathered onto anybody that might mimic it. It makes you afraid to be yourself, to be honest, to have faith in anything other than God and your own feeble attempts at self-preservation. At this point, heaven is my ultimate hope of healing...This incomplete healing is what propels my hope for a more sufficient one—a healing that is not limited by space and time. A healing that isn't undone by what triggers me here.

There, in heaven, is when I will be made whole. And not merely by faith, but tangibly. I will see it. I will feel it. I will know it...It will be an eternal reality because what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. This body, with all of its fear and shame, will be done anew... His resurrection is all of the proof that I need that he will make all things new—and not just this world and the heavens and the church, but me, my mind and my heart and my body will resurrect into something glorious... And this is our hope: that all will be made right one day, even when it doesn't feel like it...And don't think that when I speak about heaven I am disregarding the trauma of today.

I speak about heaven because it reminds me that today and all of its troubles are not eternal. So I can be honest about my struggle without being cynical, and I can look forward to what is to come without being negligent. Jesus is healing me, and Jesus will heal me. It is an already-and-not-yet-reality that has made my days much brighter. Yes. It hurts, still. But, what has happened to me or us won't hurt forever. Trauma will not have the final say. Jesus will.

Jackie Hill Perry

disciple. wife. mommy. writer. teacher. poet. emcee.

Author “Gay Girl, Good God” and “Holier Than Thou”

So I ask, Where would we be if it wasn't for the resurrection?

At our in person services, we will be having baptisms. Consider these verses.

Romans 6:3–8

³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Baptism is the opportunity to publicly proclaim belief and union with Jesus in his death and resurrection. As the person is lowered into the water, that symbolizes they are one with Jesus in his death, the person no longer is associated with the sins for which Jesus died. And as the person is raised up out of the water, that symbolizes they are one with Jesus in his resurrection, the person has been raised to new life.

As Charles Spurgeon put it: You stand before God as if you were Christ, because Christ stood before God as if He were you.

So I ask again, where would you be if it wasn't for the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Hallelujah (which means “Praise the Lord!”) for the cross! Hallelujah for the resurrection!
Hallelujah for baptisms! Hallelujah for salvation! Hallelujah for Easter!

E A S T E R



HE SUFFERED



HE DIED



HE ROSE

The inner criterion of whether or not
Christian theology is Christian
lies in the crucified Christ...
the cross is the test of everything.

Jürgen Moltmann, German theologian,
The Crucified God, page 7



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his crucifixion and resurrection.

Fleming Rutledge,
American Episcopal priest, author, and preacher,
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page 29



Good Friday

Come all
who are weary



Matthew 27:31–55

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God and Human Suffering

DOUGLAS
JOHN HALL
GOD &
Human
Suffering
An Exercise
in the Theology
of the Cross

...and He HIMSELF
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CROSS

1st Peter 2:24



Where would we be
if it wasn't for the cross?





“He has risen!”

Matthew 28:1-10

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if it wasn't for the resurrection?



He is Risen



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You stand before God as if you were Christ,
because Christ stood before God as if He were you.

Charles Spurgeon, English Baptist preacher,
Delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.
On Lord's Day Evening, April 28th, 1867.



Where would we be
if it wasn't for Easter?

He is Risen

