

## **Confident Faith – the Resurrection**

**Intro:** Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

### **Celebration “Yes, Lord, I will...”:**

- **BAPTISM is coming up next weekend!**
- **Ignite: Prayer & Worship Summit for Unity and Spiritual Awakening** for pastors and churches!  
Put on by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
- **MPLCR just finished an online Set Free**
- **Small groups & body life: people serving each other, turning from sin, finding healing, serving the community, learning to share their faith stories!**
- **BODY LIFE – GOD IS ON THE MOVE!**

### **Church-Wide Prayer: Ignite Conference & Camp**

- Canadian Church to discover Jesus in prayer, repentance, worship & to unify
- P. Ray & Fran as they continue to work with the Church to disciple her to Jesus
- Camp – for the kids going: meet Jesus, safety, fun, belonging
- Camp – ministers serving at camp – God to call them, prepare them, anoint them

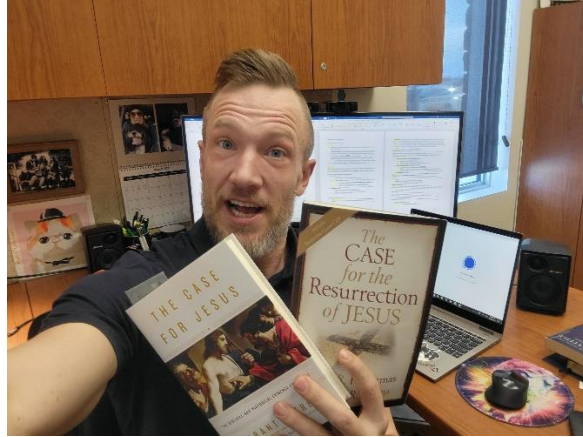
### **Last week we talked about having a Confident Faith**

- **Know what and why you believe!**
  - **1 Peter 3:15** But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy. Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet, do it with gentleness and respect.
- **The Foundation of a Confident Faith is built on a Biblical Worldview... helps us KNOW GOD**
  - You can know the right answers and not know God – e.g. the devil!
  - The point of what we are learning is to strengthen your foundation, prepare you for sharing your faith with others and encourage you to say YES to Jesus and KNOW GOD for yourself!
- **Worldview answers:**
  - Origin – where did we come from? How did we get here?
  - Problem – what is the problem with the world? Evil and brokenness
  - Solution – how do we fix what’s wrong
  - Identity – who am I

### **This week...**

We are going to continue taking steps to build a confident faith. **Confident Faith... & the Resurrection**

**PICTURE: 3 great books used in this message! Mere Christianity, The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus & The Case for Jesus**



**1 Corinthians 15:13-17** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

#### **A. Importance of the Resurrection: Gary R. Habermas**

**Richard Dawkins agrees with him!** "If the resurrection is not true Christianity becomes null and void"

- 1. It was the focal point of the disciples preaching**
  - a. Many doctrines were based on it
  - b. Belief in it is required for salvation (Rom 10:9)
  - c. It secured for us an inheritance in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4)
  - d. If it did not occur we are lost (1 Cor 15:17)
- 2. It was the evidence Jesus provided to validate his teachings**
  - a. **Matthew 12:38-41** *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.*
- 3. The apostles also used it as the primary evidence that Christianity is TRUE (Acts 17:2-3)**

**C.S. Lewis wrote in the book Mere Christianity**, as he detailed his conversion from atheism to Christianity, "you cannot conclude that he is merely a good teacher," We are left with three choices: he is either:

1. **Lord:** Jesus was who he said he was. God come in flesh;
2. **Lunatic:** Jesus thought he was God, but he actually wasn't;
3. **Liar:** Jesus knew he wasn't God, but he said he was.

**As Brant Pitre points out...** "as I continued to study the quest for Jesus, it slowly dawned on me, that for many people, there was a fourth option: namely, that the stories about Jesus in the Gospels in which he claims to be God are "legends." In other words they are not historically true."

4. **Legend:** they are stories but are not historical.

The resurrection demands every person RESPOND. You have TWO choices – REJECT HIM or EMBRACE HIM

FIRST lets rule out LEGEND.

## B. The evidence for Jesus' life, death & resurrection

### 1. Evidence for the historicity of Jesus. His LIFE & DEATH.

I. Biblically we have the 4 gospel accounts that speak of Jesus. **MANUSCRIPTS FOUND:** "To date we have over 5800 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, with an astounding 2.6 million pages of biblical text.<sup>1</sup> While some of these manuscripts are small and fragmentary, the average size of a New Testament manuscript is 450 pages.<sup>2</sup>

<https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2019/02/15/the-earliest-new-testament-manuscripts/>

II. This is **IMPORTANT:** witnesses were alive when the accounts were written. They would have objected if the claims were false.

III. **42 authors mention Jesus within 150 years of his life!** (Brent Pitre – Case for the Resurrection of Jesus)

- a. 9 authors of the NT
- b. 20 Christian writes outside the NT
- c. 4 heretical writers!
- d. 9 secular non-Christian sources! Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Phlegon, Lucian, Celsus, Mara BarSerapion, Suetonius, Thallus
  - **Evidence of Josephus** - *About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he ... wrought surprising feats.... He was the Christ. When Pilate ...condemned him to be crucified, those who had . . . come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared ... restored to life.... And the tribe of Christians ... has ... not disappeared.*
    - <https://www.history.com/news/was-jesus-real-historical-evidence>
  - **Evidence from the Babylonian Talmud** - *On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald ... cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy."*
  - <https://www.bethinking.org/jesus/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources>
- e. **OBJECTION #1: We shouldn't listen to people who already believe the evidence.** The more reliable sources are atheists who don't accept the claims of Jesus.
  - i. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/18/did-historical-jesus-exist-the-traditional-evidence-doesnt-hold-up/>
  - ii. This would be like saying in a court case... we shouldn't listen to those who have already examined the evidence and determined the accused is guilty... NO. We should only listen to the advice of those who do not believe the evidence. How one side is that?
- f. **ANSWER: The biggest problem with this statement is that it doesn't provide the MOTIVE for WHY they would create these stories.** What would be the benefit in doing so? Money? Fame? Power? **NO. they were killed, tortured, rejected, ridiculed, etc.**

they **SUFFERED** greatly because of their beliefs. Christianity only gained greater acceptance after 300AD.

- g. **Objection # 2: We can't trust the witness/historical accounts we have because they surfaced decades after the events.**
  - i. **(Brent Pitre) Compare that with**, Tiberius Ceaser – the Roman emperor during Jesus' ministry. Ten authors mention him within 150 years of his life: Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Seneca, Paterculus, Plutarch, Pliny the Elder, Strabo, Valerius Maximum and LUKE!
  - ii. Comparing sources: JUST SECULAR: 9:9 – include everyone 42:10!
  - iii. **NO one is seen championing that Tiberius was LEGEND.** They teach about him in our schools! **Perhaps they should also teach about JESUS.**

IV.**IMPORTANT**: it should also be noted that there is NO historical account of any type of debate over the historicity of Jesus. It appears that the only debate centered around his claims...

**If he was a historical figure... we are left with determining: is he Lord? Liar? Or, lunatic?**

### C. Evidence for the resurrection

- I. **The empty tomb** - There are NOT historical accounts of this being refuted. They ALL center around the CLAIMS of WHY it was empty.
  - a. **First: Joseph of Arimathea.** The burial in a known tomb by Joseph of Arimathea is considered historical because the Gospels describe Joseph as a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus. He is unlikely to be a person that Christians made up, since he would be a well-known individual.
  - b. **Second:** The tomb was first discovered empty by women. **Women were not considered reliable witnesses** in Israel at the time of Jesus. In fact, women could not even testify in a court of law.
  - c. **Third:**, The response by the Jewish leaders clearly admits to Jesus' body missing from the known tomb. In **Matthew 28:11-15**, Matthew reports that the Jews claimed from the beginning that the disciples stole the body of Jesus out of the tomb. More than that, Matthew states that the Jews were still claiming this decades later (at the time when Matthew wrote his Gospel). **If the body was not missing – this would have been corrected by the Jewish leaders!**
  - d. **Conclusion:** The site of Jesus' tomb was known to Christians and Jews alike... if it wasn't, empty... there would have been no way for the early Christians to claim the tomb was empty without seeing people refuting it... which you don't see. What you do see is people trying to explain the empty tomb in other ways...

### II. Who would have had motive to steal Jesus' body?

- a. **The disciples:** wouldn't have stolen the body, claimed to have seen him and then died for a lie,
- b. **Jewish leaders:** the Jews wouldn't have stolen the body and proved themselves WRONG and if the disciples were claiming things that were lies, they would have been refuting, rather than try to explain!
- c. **Romans:** the Romans wouldn't have stolen the body and risked an insurrection.
- d. **The LOGICAL alternative? GOD RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD.**

### III. The appearance of Jesus alive

- a. **1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV)** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.
- b. **Again... risky thing to claim! First: James & Paul were NOT believers BEFORE the resurrection! Second:** his claims that there were eye witnesses would have been risky to make considering that many of those people were alive when he was writing this. And yet, you don't find anyone refuting these claims.
- c. **OBJECTIONS.** The historical account is so reliable that attempts to discount focus more on reasons why they may have seen the "illusion" or, "hallucination" of Christ rather than simply denying the claim and saying it was made up after the fact. One atheist wrote that we can be confident that seeing Jesus alive is not important because a study of **20,000 people showed that 13% saw their loved ones after they died.** Then said, despite not being able to know why, clearly group hallucinations are possible. Possible based on? That a large group of people
- d. <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/the-evidentially-diverse-resurrection-appearances-of-jesus-free-bible-insert/>

**Jesus. Not just a historical figure.** He is God, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, gave his life as a ransom for those who were perishing, was raised back to life and is seated next to the Father waiting for his triumphant RETURN!

**D. Build your life on Jesus' life, death & resurrection (pull out Blank Cheque Cards)**

- I. **Make a Choice: Reject him? Or, embrace him?** He is coming again! To judge the living & the dead and establish His Kingdom forever! Everyone is given a choice!
  - a. **YES, Lord, I will...**
  - b. **Good news!** Jesus came to rescue you! If you call upon him you will be SAVED... if you submit to him he will set you FREE and bring you back to life!
- II. **Learn to steady yourself: Navigate challenges by starting with what you KNOW (truth)** Go back to the basics. Always. Start there. Build on a solid foundation. TRAIN YOUR MIND.
  - a. **For example:** suppose you lost your job and your spouse got attacked and assaulted... you would question WHY GOD?
  - b. **MANY atheists & progressive Christians will tell stories of why their beliefs changed.** They encountered evil in their lives, or nearby and their experience of that evil, the pain, the brokenness, caused them to change their beliefs.
  - c. **Feelings & experience CAN BE** great gifts to us! But they are not the foundation for determining TRUTH. They can help confirm it. TRUTH IS TRUTH – regardless of how we feel, or what people say!
  - **START: Biblical worldview. Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration.**
    - **God created everything:** Everything that exists has a cause, the universe exists, the universe has a cause for it's beginning – GOD – must be all powerful, exist

outside of time & space – the best logical conclusion is GOD. He fits ALL the criterion!

- **Jesus lived, died & rose again!** Proving that he is the Son of God and confirming the truth of the Bible! We can be sure that of ALL the 1000 religions out there – the God of the Bible is one TRUE GOD and He is coming again to JUDGE the living and the dead – He will make RIGHT EVERY WRONG.
- **IF TRUE:** Apply to current circumstance. God is all-powerful, He is Sovereign, He is loving, good and faithful. He has already PROVEN this.
  - **God is all powerful.** He could change my circumstances.
  - **He is Sovereign.** NOTHING is outside of his rule & reign.
  - **He is loving.** He died for ME. For everyone! And clearly states that he desires, “none to perish.”
  - **He is good.** He created all things and everything was GOOD until humans sinned and brought EVIL into the world.
  - **He is faithful.** He made a way for us to be forgiven our sins and has shown that he will do ANYTHING to draw us to himself – other than violate our free will to CHOOSE HIM OR REJECT HIM.
  - **He is our King & Judge.** He is a good King. But he will hold all people to account for their deeds.
- **RESPOND:** Based on what I know. Will I choose to trust him today? Will I trust him in my current struggle? If I know he is good, I can trust him when I don’t get answers right away! **He is working all things for ULTIMATE GOOD – dot vs LINE**
- **RESPOND:** If he is who he says he is. Will I trust him with my heart?
  - **NO ONE CAN CHOOSE FOR YOU.**

III. **Know God: Experience a relationship with Jesus by loving, serving, worshipping, obeying & sharing him with others!**

**MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!**

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**SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023**

**Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship**

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal:** Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers