

THE GREATEST MIRACLE

CMBC Easter 2015

1 Corinthians 15:1 - 8

There are stories in the Bible about some amazing miracles.

We often use that term very lightly, "It's a miracle," we say.

But the miracles of the Bible are clearly acts of God that cannot be explained in any other way but that God exercised His power to accomplish miraculous results.

- The parting of the Red Sea
- Fire coming down from heaven to consume Elijah's water soaked offering
- Healings, like healing the leprosy of the Syrian General Naaman.
- The raising of Lazarus from the dead.
- Even creation is an incredible miracle

But no miracle is greater, no miracle is more impossible, no miracle is more significant than the miracle of Easter morning - Jesus rising from the dead.

What a week that was for the disciples and the followers of Jesus.

- During the night before the first day of the week, they were crushed with disappointment at the death of Jesus, and gripped with fear for their own lives.
- And now the grave was empty, with the grave clothes still there. What did this mean?
- And then suddenly he was right there in the room with them. Was this a ghost who had come to haunt them for having run away?
- And then his words to them were, "**Peace be with you. Why are you troubled? It is I myself! Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.**"

What makes this miracle so amazing is what we know about the eternal consequences of sin.

- Sin causes death, and that is why we are all dying.
- What is more, it causes spiritual death, the eternal damnation of being separated from God.
- With sin there is no going back.
- It is like trying to recapture the minute that has just passed. It is impossible. What has been lived is done, gone.

- Jesus died on the cross because he was carrying our sin, taking our consequences, our damnation.

The miracle is power of God to overcome the finality of sin and death, and the grave could not hold Jesus.

- God was victorious over them all, victorious on our behalf.
- Jesus rose from the dead.
- And because it was our sin that he carried, we are victorious with him.
- He is alive. We have new eternal life in him.
- And it had to be more than just a spiritual resurrection, one that we would have to question and guess at.
- This was a bodily resurrection, a glorified body, free from the limitations of sin.
- He was the first to rise in this way, but not the last. He was the first of the resurrection we will experience, because He did this on our behalf.

Jesus is alive. And this has important implications for us and our understanding of our relationship with God.

1. A RESURRECTED BODY

- a. It Demands A Response
 - i. A real bodily resurrection means you need to respond
 - ii. You can't fake a bodily resurrection as you could a "spiritual" one

- b. Attempts To Down Play A Bodily Resurrection
 - i. Some say he didn't die, just passed out
 - ii. Just a spiritual resurrection
 - iii. **ILL** The final scene in the movie, Killing Jesus, has Peter getting a big catch of fish and crying out, "He is back!" but there is no body. No miracle.
 - iv. Or even the idea that it was just a wishful vision for the disciples

- c. Jesus Had A Bodily Resurrection
 - i. They touched him
 1. The women
 2. Thomas

John 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." [28] Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

 - ii. He ate with them
Luke 24:36 – 48

[41] And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" [42] They gave him a piece of broiled fish, [43] and he took it and ate it in their presence.
[44] He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."
[45] Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.
[46] He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, [47] and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things.

- d. He was seen later by hundreds
 - i. There is overwhelming evidence that the greatest miracle ever happened on that morning.
 - ii. Much more evidence than that Plato or Aristotle ever lived.
 - iii. Jesus is truly alive.

2. THE PHYSICAL BODY MATTERS TO JESUS

- a. He Cares About The Body
 - i. The body is our primary ally to Christlikeness
1 Cor 6:19 – 20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?* [20] For ye are bought

with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Romans 6:13

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

- ii. Christ's redemption was not just for our spirit or soul but also for our body

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the body I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- iii. Man believes with the heart, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation

Romans 10:9 - 10

[9] If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.

1. The body takes on the quality of the inner life.
2. The redemption of the body will be completed later but even now the body is made alive

- iv. And at our resurrection there will be a bodily resurrection

Romans 8:11

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

1 Corinthians 15:52 For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

- v. God cares about our bodies and the importance of that is demonstrated in Christ's bodily resurrection
- vi. This is an important part of the power of the resurrection and that demands a response from us.

b. He Cares About Material Things

- i. Your work and place of work is changed because of the resurrection

- ii. He cares about your need for food.

Jesus said, **The Father knows you have need of all these things, but seek first the kingdom of God**

Matthew 10:[29] Are not two sparrows sold for a penny * ? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. [30] And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [31] So don't be afraid; you are

worth more than many sparrows.

- c. He Cares About Our Abuses
 - i. Healing from the consequences of sin
 - ii. Abuse you face
 - iii. What worry does to your body
 - iv. The habits
 - v. His resurrection overcomes all

3. JESUS ENTERS INTO OUR REAL LIFE

- a. He cared about the broken hearts by the tomb
 - i. Broken, bitter hearts
 - ii. Who loved him dearly
 - iii. He give then new joy, new life, new hope
- b. The bewildered travellers
 - Luke 24:13 – 20** on the road to Emmaus
 - i. The road of disillusionment, bewilderment, despair
 - ii. But they were still talking about Jesus
 - iii. Times when a person can't understand
 - iv. Gives new light
- c. The fearful in the upper room
 - i. Afraid, paralyzed by fear – lost courage
 - ii. Jangled nerves
 - iii. Jesus didn't give up on them
- d. The doubters
 - i. 2 kinds of doubts
 - ii. An intellectual superiority that takes pride in its doubt
 - iii. A doubt that is desperate and passionate
 - Doubt that continues in a desperate struggle for certainty, that wants to believe
 - iv. Jesus comes back
- e. Those fighting a last ditch battle
 - i. James (one of his brothers) and Paul
 - 1. There was no indifference here
 - 2. These men were intent in their hatred of Jesus
 - ii. But as long as there is seriousness there is the chance that they will yet believe
 - iii. With indifference nothing can be done

- Few facts of history are better documented than the resurrection of Jesus
- And He offers us the assurance that our bodily resurrection is sure
- But until then, He cares about our bodies, our material work, our real life.
- He only asks you to believe.

Not surprising that Paul wrote, "If you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that **God raised him from the dead**, you will be saved." **Rom 10:9**

For all the doubting, hurting, troubled lives: open your life to Jesus