The Essentials About Jesus according to Peter Pastor Serge
~ Acts 2:22-36 March 31, 2024

Introduction

1) **The story of the R of Jesus seems to evoke Δ reactions & feelings to Δ people**
   - **a) For some, it is just a feel good story**
     - i) Who cares if it is true or not
       - (1) What is important is how it makes me feel
       - (2) It is a nice story because it provides hope & inspiration in the face of death & the afterlife. It is a story of renewal after tragedy
     - ii) It is a good story because of its romantic value, in the sense of providing a toned down view of death
       - (1) It is part of our religious culture and it is a nice annual celebration like Christmas
     - iii) But at the end of the day, if the R did not really happen and it is just a good story, what are we doing here today?
   - **b) For others however, starting w/ the apostle Paul, it is foundational to life & the future**
     - i) The R changes everything
     - ii) **First,** it is a historical event of highest importance
       - (1) It is the heart of the Gospel:
         - (a) Paul says in 1 Co 15 that…No R, means no Gospel, means no forgiveness of sin and we are still in our sins
         - (b) No R means we are the most miserable people of all the earth because our hope is only for this life, not the life to come
       - (2) We also make God a liar
     - iii) **Secondly**, It is a historical event w/ physical, spiritual and eternal implications for the early church and for us today as well
       - (1) We don't see the full implication of the R of Jesus yet because of the nature of the Kingdom of God, i.e. the already but not yet
         - (a) Jesus is the first fruit of the harvest so to speak
         - (b) He has provided spiritual regeneration & life
           - (i) The physical aspect of our regeneration still awaits the second coming of Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom.

2) **So this morning, we want to look at a text found in the book of Acts 2 v.22-36 and see what** it tells us about Jesus and the resurrection
   - **a) READ ➔ Acts 2:22-36**
   - b) This text follows the Pentecost and is part of Peter's explanation for what happened in the upper room where the disciples experienced the coming of the HS & its manifestation heard by the crowd visiting Jerusalem on the occasion of Pentecost who heard the marvels of God being spoken in their own language
   - c) This text gives us a nice overview about the person of Jesus, his works and position in Gods' redemptive plan.
     - i) I titled the message, the essentials on Jesus according to Peter
     - ii) We Won't cover the last part of the passage i.e. v. 33-36
   - d) Now, in light of our culture, which prizes pluralism & relativism these days I will say something that will be very offensive to some of you here today. It will challenge the very foundation of pluralism & relativism

i) Jesus is not just a religious figure among many, he is THE religious figure of all time, in fact, if this text is true, Jesus is the only path to the Father and the only one who really addressed our mortal predicament and reconciled us w/ God & he rose from the dead as a proof

e) This text is telling us 4 important things about Jesus & the R, & Jesus relationship to God: things that distinguishes Jesus from any religious leaders you have ever known.

The first thing Peter is telling us about Jesus was that he was <u>MAN ACCREDITED BY GOD</u> to you

1) v.22 we read "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders & signs which God did among you through him"

1) There are so many amazing thing you can read/learn about Jesus in the Gospels
   a) Read about his character: he was living, gracious, compassionate, attractive
      i) Generally, he was gentle and inspired confidence & safety
      ii) But Jesus was not a wimp: at times he could be tough with non-sense, or even the religious leaders
   b) Another amazing thing about Jesus was his teaching
      i) We hear many times in the gospel that the crowds were amazed by his teaching:
         (1) Mk 1:22 the people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.
         (2) He also was brilliant in his answers when the Pharisees tried to trap him in his understanding of the Scripture and theology
      ii) But it was not just his teaching that was creating amazement in Israel…

2) Peter tell us of something else:
   a) that Jesus was also accredited/attested by God to you, by miracles, wonder and signs God performed through him as you yourself know
      i) Jesus was able through the power of the HS to perform miracle, signs and wonders
         (1) On many occasions, Jesus was able to performs healing, casting out demons, show authority & power over the forces of nature and even perform the resurrection of Lazarus
         (2) These were not private miracles reported to the crowd after the fact.
            (a) These were done publically even in front of his people including his critics as Peter says God did this "among you, as you yourself know"
      ii) Even his contemporary critics admitted to his miraculous power but attributed his power as coming from Beelzebub/Satan
         (1) Even some extra biblical material attest to that as well
      iii) The purpose of these miracles was to draw attention & point to something about Jesus. These were saying Something out of the ordinary is taking place in the person of Jesus
         (1) That he was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God.
            (a) The one promised by God to save Israel from their sins and be the savior of the world.
            (b) These signs he performed were supposed to accompany the person of the Messiah as predicted by the prophet Isaiah Is 29:18-21, 35:5-6, 66:1,2 (Lk 7:22, 4:18)
         (2) And God used them to show is compassion to those suffering, but also to attest that Jesus was indeed the Messiah

The second thing Peter address the cause & responsibility behind the death of Jesus. He tells us that Jesus <u>WAS DELIVERED ACCORDING TO THE SET PURPOSE</u> of God but w/ the participation of wicked people

1) People being part of the Pentecost crowd knew or quickly became aware of the fact of Jesus death by crucifixion at the hand of Pontius Pilate under the pretense he was a criminal
   a) There were certainly discussion & opinion among them about this concerning why…
2) Even these days, every now and then, we come across articles or documentary about who was really responsible for the death of Jesus. Is it the Jews or the Romans?
   a) This question apparently haunted the Christian/Jewish relationship for nearly 2000y
   b) This question has also been behind waves of anti-Semitism throughout history
   c) So serious is this question, even in our days, that in 2011 the Pope Benedict felt the need to write a book saying that the Jewish people were not responsibility for the death of Jesus… and exonerated the Jewish nation as a whole but pointed to the temple aristocracy
3) But Peter explain the true reason behind Jesus death
   a) Ethnicity had little to do and plays only a secondary role in the death of Christ.
      i) The Moral condition of both Jews and Romans have more to do with it than anything
   b) Peter answers the question, saying The death of Jesus was the result of 2 cause/reasons
      i) It was the concurrence of the
         (1) Set purpose & foreknowledge of God and you, men of Israel, w/ the help of wicked men who put him to death
         (2) It was The concurrent participation of a holy, just and merciful God and wicked, evil men who acted for 2 Δ moral reasons: mercy for us/sins & wickedness
      ii) This is what is called a paradox: something that seems to be logically incoherent and contradictory, yet it is not.
         (1) Otherwise, there would not be any human responsibility and yet God will call every human being to account at the end of time…
   c) Certainly there is a great mystery is at work here:
      i) God ultimately in his sovereignty, and w/the willingness of the Son, ordaining something that must happen as part of his plan w/o culpability & with the participation of evil, wicked people who acted freely w/ intention & w/o coercion
         (1) This is a great example of God using secondary causes to achieve his purpose
      ii) Somehow, the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man meet & connect together somewhere in a black box, and w/o contradiction or violation, both retaining their free agency & both remaining intact in their extension and application.
         (1) This is One of those mysteries that even if God tried to explain us, we would not be able to comprehend at all.
      iii) This planned atoning death of Jesus, we are told by Paul somewhere else, was planned before the foundation of the world and was the only way a holy, just, loving and merciful God could take care of our sin w/o violating his justice & holiness while at the same time extending mercy and forgiveness to whoever repents and puts their trust in Christ.
         (1) Because Jesus carried our sins in our behalf in order to pay the penalty & freely justify us
         (2) But also, by the cross, Jesus disarmed the powers of darkness and authorities in the heavenly realms and put them to shame (Col 2:15)
         (3) So, at the end of the day, it is not the Romans or the Jews that ultimately condemned Jesus.
            (a) it is our sins that brought Jesus to the cross and brought the necessity of the cross

The third thing Peter tell us about Jesus is <u>THAT GOD REAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD</u> (and when we are talking about the R of Jesus, we are talking about a bodily R)

He says **<u>BUT</u>** God raised him from the dead: "BUT" is the particle that changes everything

1) Good Friday & The death of Jesus was not the final chapter in God's redemptive book

a) There was R Sunday! God had something else in mind for Δ reason, one being to destroy the work of the devil by overcoming death with life
b) If the death of Jesus was the concurrent work of God and men, not so with the resurrection.
    i) It is strictly an act of God and God only and men had nothing to do in it
        (1) It is certainly a miracle again

2) **We read that "God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because** it was impossible for death to keep a hold on him"
    a) Did you hear this? Because it was impossible for death to keep a hold on him
    b) The resurrection of Jesus was in part the result of an impossibility…
        i) This impossibility certainly begs the question: WHY was it impossible for death…

3) Peter tells us why in the next chapter of Acts (3:15)
    a) "You disowned the Holy & Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you instead. You killed the AUTHOR OF LIFE, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.
    b) SO, why was it impossible to death to keep a hold on him?
        i) Because Jesus is the author of life, the prince of life
            (1) But not only is he the author of life, he is by definition LIFE itself, as a divine person, Jesus is self-existent. Life is what defines him & you cannot kill life. That is why it was impossible for death to keep a hold on him.
    c) On numerous occasions Jesus affirm this about himself
        i) The R simply mean that there is a force or a power out there that is greater than the power of death…simple and this is a power inherent to the person of God & Jesus
        ii) At the beginning of his Gospel, john establishes the identity of the Logos/Word, that is Jesus prior to the creation of everything and said of him that
            (1) "in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Through him, all things were made & w/o him, nothing was made. AND in HIM WAS LIFE
            (2) He was and is the source of all life that exist
        iii) On one occasion after clearing the temple of the merchant, (Jn 2:19)
            (1) The Jewish authorities demanded of him: what miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority for doing this?
            (2) Jesus responded: destroy this temple (meaning his body) and I will raise it again in 3 days
        iv) Jn 5:26 on another occasion when he was responding to the accusation of the Jews, he said "For as the Father as life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in Himself too.
        v) He 7:16 speaks of him as having an indestructible life
        vi) On another occasion, just prior to the resurrection of Lazarus in the Gospel of John, Jesus said of himself that **he is the Resurrection and the life**, he who believe in me will live, even though he dies (Jn 11: 25)
            (1) Not that HE HAS the power of life & R, but that HE IS the power
    d) In Jesus is the power of life and the power of R
        i) This is a self-description of Jesus, it is part of who he is as Son of God
        ii) And as a result of his nature, he is able to grant eternal life to whoever turn to him in faith
        iii) The bottom line is this: God, the Father, Son and HS is a self-existing being. He receives life from nowhere because he is self-existing but gives life to everything else
        iv) He had to be raised because of the power of life in him over death
    e) The Father, the Son and the HS were all involved in the R of Jesus
        i) It was an act of the triune God

f) The R simply means that there is a power stronger than the power of death

Now, Peter is telling us a 4rth thing about the R of Jesus v.25-32 and it is quite profound in the way it is set up. The R was foreseen and foretold by the OT

1) It is not a secret that there tons of prophecies in the OT about the coming messiah
   a) Over 300 of them giving all kinds of details about his coming & his background
   b) But if there was nothing about the R, something would be missing
2) But Peter is telling us here that the R of the Messiah was something that was also foreseen & foretold in the OT.
   a) The R is Not referred too many times, but nevertheless, here and there it is implicitly referred to and foretold in a few OT text. One of them is found in Ps 18: 8-11 referred to in Acts 2: 25-32
3) In v.25-32, he is refereeing to the testimony of David about the R in Ps 16 saying
   a) that when David spoke these words or penned down this Psalm, he was not talking about himself but foresaw the R of the Messiah on the basis of an oath God spoke to him about putting one of his descendant on his throne, oath given in 2 Sa 7
      i) David then speaks of this descendent
   b) But here is the kicker: v. 25 which says, "**I saw the Lord** always before me, because he is at my right hand" with the rest of the passage is in fact reporting prophetically the words of The Messiah, Jesus.
      i) The "I", i.e. the first person speaking here is not David, but the Messiah, words that David prophetically wrote in this Psalm
      ii) As one theologian astutely comments, The words in v.25-28 describes the Messiah's confidence that he will not be abandoned to the grave or see decay as he looked to the cross, (McArthur, p65), because he is beholding the presence of God before him and because of the presence of the Lord at his right hand
   c) This is not the only occasion this kind of prophetic utterance happens in the Psalms.
      i) Think of Psalm 22 which starts with saying "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" words that Jesus pronounced in his agony of the cross
4) **Summarize; So, Jesus**
   a) A man accredited by God, crucified at the hand of wicked men but according to the set purpose of God, BUT raised from the dead as witnessed by the apostle and announced by the OT

Now At this point, some of you have already said good bye and have hang up the phone, thinking, the R is simply not something I can believe in this, OR that's nice but I don't really believe in God or in Jesus

1) So, if you are skeptic or a doubter, I want to quickly address a few questions. I won't go into details but provide sufficient material just to trigger your curiosity so you can take the next step and pursue your own research
2) From a conceptual or scientific perspective: how can this be possible? We live in a world where everyone dies.
   a) So, the R simply means there is a force or a power out there that is stronger than the power of death. That is all it takes!
   b) On one hand, it is surprising because we don't see that happening every day, if at all
   c) On another hand, we should not be surprised by the concept of a force more powerful than another or able to overcome an other
      i) We see that happening everyday

(1) Beach Ball: no matter how hard you try to push it or keep it under water, it wants to come up
(2) Plane: The force of gravity is overcome by the propelling force of its engines enabling an aircraft to move forward into the air or a space
(3) Also the power of light vs darkness

d) And if there is a God who has the power of life & can overcome the laws of nature, why not?
e) But if there is no God, what do you believe in? ➔ Existence coming out of nothing?
   i) you still have to believe in a miracle to account for the existence of this universe
   ii) This is what science tells us through the Big Bang theory

3) From a historical perspective: the question is: did the R really happen, can we trust the records of the NT? Here are a few things to consider
   a) Even if you don't consider the NT to be sacred scripture, there is enough reliable historical information supporting the R of Jesus to establish it as the best explanation for these facts
      i) In order to establish historical events/facts, historians have a method that use criteria to establish their authenticity.
         (1) These would include for instance: eye witness testimonies, early date of the material, multiple independent reports about an event, enemies attestation, and much more
         (2) There are at least 5 facts that are so strongly attested that they cannot be denied historically based on the historical method using these criteria of authenticity.
            (a) If you do deny them, you will have to deny tons of other well known historical events or figures
            (b) These 5 facts also held as authentic & undeniable by the vast majority of critical scholars who are historians, including not only religious ones but also skeptics, agnostic, liberal and atheists.
         (3) One of these undeniable report is the Post-Resurrection appearance of Jesus: i.e. that soon after his death, his followers had real experiences they thought were actual appearances of the risen Jesus
            (a) As a result, their lives were transformed and they were ready to die for the proclamation of the resurrection. In fact some did. We usually don't want to die for a lie you would have told
            (b) In Acts 1:3 we read that "after his suffering, Jesus showed himself to the apostles and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive
            (c) I Co 15 :1-3 tells us that Jesus appeared at one point to more than 500 brothers who were still alive at the time of the writing of 1Co
   b) Now in this case and the case of all the other facts, there are a number of alternative theories that have been proposed to explain away the R.
      i) However, all these theories trying to explain away the R fail to account for all the facts known w/ quasi-certainty
      ii) The R is the best explanation for all these facts.
   c) We have resources available at our table on the way out for you to explore

Conclusion

From a redemptive perspective, the R of Jesus means a certain number of things for us

1) First, the R is the Father's seal of approval of the work of Jesus on the cross and enable Jesus to be declared not only savior but also Lord & Christ over all Act 2:36
   a) w/o the R, the cross loses its meaning and power

b) it would mean that the atonement Jesus provided was not sufficient or accepted by the Father and that our sins cannot be forgiven
    i) but because Jesus rose from the dead, we can be assured that forgiveness is available to whoever ask for it

1) Second, it means the curse placed on creation and that we inherited as a result of A&E sin had been reversed
    a) Now death exist because of the sin of A & E.
        i) When they sinned, they were cut off from the source of life
        ii) With sin, death also entered into the word as it is part of the essence of the kingdom of darkness Satan establish on this earth
    b) The same thing with the curse of the Law
    c) The blessings to all nations promised to Abraham have come to us through Jesus
2) Thirdly, it means That life has triumphed over death: the power of death is overcome
    a) It is only a question of time that the power of death will be eradicated along with sin, pain, suffering and evil
    b) The rule of darkness has been overcome by the Cross
3) Fourthly, That the power of life/righteousness triumph over sin as per Ro 6
    a) So, the power of R is also available to every believer
    b) Something we need to take advantage of in order to make progress in our Xian walk
4) Fifthly, That Jesus triumph over Satan
    a) We read in 1 Jn 3:8 “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the work of the Devil”
    b) Well, w/ the cross and the R, his work have been destroyed
    c) When Satan through he was dealing a fatal blow to the Son of God,
        i) He was only, in the word of Genesis 3, striking his heal
        ii) But he himself was dealt a fatal blow, his head being crushed
    d) The cross made a public spectacles of the powers and authorities of darkness and put them to shame (Col 2:15

Conclusion

And Because of Jesus, we can now say w/ Paul, “O death, where is your victory?”

Your power has been defeated, because, there is a new sheriff in town, the power of life

Benediction

He is alive! At the end of our passage for today, the Apostle Peter end w/ the words of the patriarch David by saying….

For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand
35 until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.”’
36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”