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Grace Evangelical Church

Resurrection Day – April 24, 2011

“The Old Rugged Cross Through The Open Tomb”

Luke 24:25-27; Acts 1:6-11; Romans 5:22; 10:9-13; II Corinthians 5:15; Revelation 21

A father tells the story of their eight-year-old Maggie who was getting ready for school. Her Dad says that he peeked into her room to be sure that she had tidied it up.

"You call THAT a made bed?" I asked.

No Dad," Maggie replied. "It's just a rough draft.

It's just a rough draft.

I trust on this resurrection morning, that you are most grateful to the Lord, that the bodily resurrection of Christ is not a rough draft.

That is, the bodily resurrection of Christ is not something in the making. It is not something that must be done over and over until it is an actual event in history.

No, the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ took place in our time space existence. It is the real thing. It doesn't have to have anything added to it or taken from it. The bodily resurrection of Christ is not a rough draft. Praise God.

Jesus Christ who died on the cross to pay for the sins of the world, which is death, was buried, and He rose again bodily the third day according to the Scriptures or the Bible.

Of course, with anything that the biblical God does in time, there are always the naysayers.

I. Those who deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. Some say that Jesus didn't actually die. He swooned and somehow got out of the tomb alive.

2. Others say that His disciples stole the body, or that the women came to the wrong tomb.

3. Then others say that the resurrected Christ the disciples saw was only a phantom or the figment of their imagination. It really wasn't the Christ who had died. Rather a spooky belief if you ask me.

4. Still others today are celebrating the spirit of the resurrected Christ. They will tell you that the bodily resurrection of Christ is not the issue, it doesn't matter that He rose from the dead. In fact, to them, He didn't. The spirit of resurrection is what we want to get into. Why it's the great teaching of a new beginning, of being born to life eternal.

But how can you have a resurrection experience of a new beginning without there being an actual and factual bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ? Impossible. It's a deception from the evil one who wants people to reject and deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It's the old idea that you can have some kind of a new beginning without any historical fact. Which means, that the person becomes the truth, which is really sad, for people are finite, and are here today and gone tomorrow. For the thinking person, there has to be more than that!!

II. The fact of the matter in the historical bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. The eyewitnesses.

(1) Individuals.

The Gospel writers of Matthew (Matthew 28), Mark (16), Luke (24), and John (John 20), all tell us the same thing. Jesus Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose bodily from the grave on the third day. Dr. Luke gives us the account in the Book of Acts of what Peter was preaching. His message was this:

"This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death,

since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:23-24).

Again in Acts 3:13-15.

"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our father, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses."

People in Jerusalem knew what had happened regarding Jesus Christ. If Christ's bodily resurrection were not true, Peter and the disciples would have been laughed out of town.

That's why Peter in his first letter wrote about being born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Peter 1:3).

2. Their records.

The eyewitnesses to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ are the ones who give us the record that we have before us here.

Those who say that the records are not reliable are questioning the veracity of the eyewitnesses. These men were not lying about who Jesus was, what He did in His life, and that He died on the cross, was buried and rose again.

(1) That's why John wrote this in his Gospel,

"This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

(2) Luke penned these words at the beginning of his Book of Acts,

"To these He (referring to Christ) also present Himself alive, after His suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

These words lead us to consider Christ's appearances after His bodily resurrection.

2. Christ's appearances.

After His bodily resurrection, Christ appeared:

- (1) To Mary Magdalene and the other women (Matt. 28:8-10; John 20:11-18; Mark 16:9-10).
- (2) To Peter probably in the afternoon (Luke 24:34; I Cor. 15:5).
- (3) To the disciples on the Road to Emmaus toward evening (Luke 24:13-32; Mark 16:12).
- (4) To the disciples except Thomas, in the upper room (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25).
- (5) To the other disciples, including Thomas, on the next Sunday night (Mark 16:14; John 20:26-29).
- (6) To seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-24).
- (7) To the apostle and more than 500 brethren and James, the Lord's half brother (I Cor. 15:6-7).
- (8) To those who witnessed Christ's ascension (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ came into the world, died on the cross, was buried, and rose again the third day, was seen for 40 days after His resurrection and He ascended into heaven.

What's the teaching from all of this?

3. The biblical teaching.

(1) The bodily resurrection of Christ tells us that the past history in the Bible that is written is true.

How do we know that the Old Testament Scriptures are true and not just something just made up by man – yes, those accounts about Adam and Eve, the flood, and Abraham, along with Moses, David, and the prophets?

1. The Lord believed in Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4-5).

The Lord said that He (that is God created them from the beginning made them male and female (some who other ideas about what marriage is today, ought to read this verse). The Lord went on to say (Quoting from

Genesis 2:24), "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to His wife; and the two shall become one flesh."

2. The Lord believed in Noah (Matt. 24:37-39).

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

3. The Lord believed in Moses (John 7:19).

Jesus spoke to the Jews, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you carries out the law? Why do you seek to kill me?"

4. The Lord believed in Abraham (John 8:56).

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

5. The Lord believed in David (Matt. 12:3).

"Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions?"

6. The Lord believed in Old Testament prophets (Matt. 5:17).

"Think not that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

But there is another most important teaching that must be added about how the bodily resurrection of Christ solidifies the accuracy and veracity of the Old Testament.

7. The Lord believed and knew that the Old Testament Scriptures were talking about HIM in shadow, or embryo form.

After His resurrection, the Lord in one of His appearances to His disciples He told them in Luke 24:44-47 that the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (From the Writings, the third division of the Hebrew Old Testament) must be fulfilled. Then he opened their understanding to the Scriptures how they foretold that He must suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations beginning at Jerusalem."

Sure an individual can say they believe in somebody because they lived in the past, but then that person passes away. It doesn't really make much difference what the person believed.

But if that person says someone lived, then dies, but comes back from the grave, it solidifies the veracity of those that He believed in, as well as the very record that speaks of Himself.

The bodily resurrection of Christ tells us without a doubt that the Old Testament Scriptures are true and dependable!

2. The bodily resurrection of Christ tells us that the New Testament Scriptures are true and we in the present are an extension of the New Testament Church today.

(1) Jesus foretold the accuracy of the New Testament Scriptures or He pre-authenticated their accuracy and validity (John 14: 26; 16:13).

In John 14:26 – Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things, and bring to remembrance all that I said to you."

In John 16:13 - the Lord taught, "When He, the Spirit of Truth come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

Christ was foretelling the Holy Spirit would come who guide and direct the writers of the New Testament Scriptures to record what God would guide them to write. Peter penned that Holy Men of God were moved along (like wind in sail) by the Holy Spirit to write the prophecy of Scripture (II Pet. 1:21).

Christ's bodily resurrection secures the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures as well.

(2) Jesus foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit, who came at Pentecost, which was the starting of the New Testament church which we are a part of today (John 15:26; 14:17; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2; Eph. 1:19-23).

Jesus words:

John 15:26 - "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of me."

John 14:17 - "Jesus said a little earlier in that the Holy Spirit who now was with them would live in them.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said that He would build His church.

Acts

In Acts 2 – The Holy Spirit Came upon the believing Jews.

In Acts 10 - the Holy Spirit came upon the believing house of Cornelius. The church was now founded with both Jew and Gentile being a part of the body of Christ through faith in HIM.

In Ephesians 1:19-23, Paul gave the basis of the church of Jesus Christ.

"And what is the surpassing greatness of the power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all thing to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

What's Paul saying in these verses?

The church that God is building through us in the power of the Holy Spirit, is based upon the death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is no true church of Jesus Christ. No universal church of Jesus Christ, no local church of Jesus Christ. No Christ living in believers. No one Father, one Lord, one Holy Spirit, one faith, one hope of your calling, and one baptism.

Jesus foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit and that He would build His church (Matthew 16:18). His bodily resurrection seals that teaching and tells us that it is true. His church is alive and well on planet earth.

The bodily resurrection of Christ, then, gives us the privilege in the present to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and collective relationship with each other in the family today.

In addition,

3. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ tells us that there is a future for us beyond this life.

John 14:1-3 – Jesus' classic words:

"Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

Jesus said that He was going away, before His death, burial, and bodily resurrection. He died, was buried, and rose from dead bodily. Yes, He ascended, but the promise was given that He would return.

In Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, Jesus foretold what it would be like before His return. Some of which we are seeing right now in our world with earthquakes, famines, and catastrophes. Nation also will arise against nation. At the end of the tribulation period, Jesus will come to earth to put down all rebellion and wickedness.

Christ's return would never happen unless He conquered the grave bodily.

In Titus 2, we are also told that there is the blessed hope of Christ's return, which I believe is telling us that Christ will come for His church before the tribulation period. Also I Thessalonians 4 tells us that Christ returns before the tribulation, bringing with Him those who have already died in Him, and taking with Him those who are

followers of Him. Then in I Thessalonians 5, there is the beginning of the Day of the Lord, which is the beginning of the tribulation.

Eventually after the millennium, and certain judgments, Christ will bring in the new heaven and earth in Revelation 21. All of that God has prepared for believers of all ages in the eternal state is all based upon the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Past, Present, and Future of God's plan for individuals and the world is based upon the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

No bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are people most to be pitied, most miserable. We are people in the same state as those who deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

III. The bodily resurrection of Christ applied to our lives today.

Since Christ conquered the grave bodily, He is the risen Christ.

1 .We can know where we came from –know our origin.

(1) Evolution is the popular theory in the public arena today.

Somehow we washed up on the shore as some sort of slime from the sea of uncertainty, and now after millions and millions of years we are intelligent male and female individuals.

There is floating around the infinite monkey theory. The infinite monkey theory states that a monkey hitting keys at random on a typewriter keyboard for an infinite amount of time will almost surely type a given text, such as the complete works of William Shakespeare. For a monkey to even type just Shakespeare's Hamlet, would be impossible even it occurred during a period of time of the order of the age of the universe.

Bringing this idea of the monkey theory into the computer age, I understand that a single computer was placed in a monkey enclosure at Paignton Zoo located in Devon, England, to monitor the literary output of six primates. Students at University of Plymouth, 2003, were paid for from a £2,000 Arts Council grant

The aim: To test the "infinite monkey theory", which states that if a monkey hits keys at random on a typewriter keyboard for an infinite amount of time, it will almost surely type a given text, such as the complete works of **William Shakespeare.**

What was learned: The theory is flawed. After one month - admittedly not an "infinite" amount of time - the monkeys had partially destroyed the machine, used it as a lavatory.

Evolution is only a theory. The evolutionist has no explanation for how does non-life produce life.

(2) We are created in the image of God – biblical creationism.

Since the bodily resurrected Christ substantiates the Creation Account in the Book of Genesis, we know that we are created in the image of God. There is no doubt that the Book of Genesis is accurate and dependable.

In fact Colossians 1 tells us that we were created by Jesus Himself. God doesn't take millions and millions of years to bring something into existence. He doesn't need time. He creates time. He creates supernaturally, suddenly, and with superficial age, that is Adam and Eve looked like they had age when they were first created but they didn't.

God created Adam out of the dust of the ground and Eve out of a rib from Adam. And God breathed into each of them His life, meaning that they were made in His image with an immaterial part, a mind, an emotion, and a will. Now they were able to think like God, love like God, and serve Him. Yes, they could worship God.

****Created physically by God, we are infinitely valuable before God physically.**

In fact I was looking at something this week from the Inter Science Institute that estimated that we are worth more than \$45 million when the body is broken down into fluids, tissues, and germ fighting. Bone marrow headed the list at \$23 million based on 1000 grams at \$23000 per gram. DNA can fetch \$9.7 million, while extracting antibodies can bring \$7.3 million.

So you don't have to feel like a million dollars any more. You can feel like \$45 million, instead. Why? You are created by God in your body.

But even more than that,

****God created us with an infinitely valuable non-material part.**

The Bible tells us that the body without the spirit is dead. Our spirits made up of our mind, will, and emotion, are what lives on after the body dies. That's why Jesus taught that it is possible to gain the whole world and lose one's soul. Made in the image of God in his material part means that He is infinitely valuable before God.

Evolution provides no basis for why a person is infinitely valuable in his person, body and spirit. Is it any wonder that we have such confusion in our world as to who one really is. No wonder people take drugs, try to find meaning in power, possession, sex, and prestige. No wonder young people get all wrapped up in that which can destroy their lives. People don't know their origin. Coming from the sea of uncertainty provides no certainty of where one came from, one's origin. There is no reason for them to have any concept that they are infinitely valuable in their bodies and in their spirits.

Only knowing one is created by God in one's body and spirit gives an individual the reason to know he or she has infinite worth and is responsible to God, one's Creator.

Secondly, since Christ has conquered the grave bodily,

2. We can know what the basic problem is with our lives and in the world.

We have sinned in Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3).

When Adam and Even sinned in the Garden, that is where the problem began which has plagued all of time since then, and still is present with us today.

Romans 5 tells us that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death spread to all men, because all have sinned.

I Corinthians 15:22 tells us that as in Adam we all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

I talked with a man this week about his spiritual condition. He didn't think that he needed to be forgiven. I tried to point out to him otherwise.

But what did Jesus say? "From within , out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

Only the biblical record, substantiated by the bodily risen Christ, provides us the answer to our origin and what is wrong with our lives to day – we are created in God's image but have sinned against God, and that is why there is so much wickedness and turmoil in our world today.

But, also, because of the bodily resurrection of Christ,

3. We can know that there is an eternal answer to our sin against God.

In the Garden God gave the promise of the coming Savior after Adam and Eve sinned.

For in the midst of man's sin is always the presence of God's love and grace.

The forecast of the Savior's coming came to a reality when Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. In His life he said that whoever believed in Him would have eternal life.

Jesus talked to the Pharisees about being a slave to their sin. He said that to know the Truth, which He was, they would be free.

But then, Jesus was crucified. He died, and He rose again the third day.

This meant that now God's forgiveness and eternal life were available to any who would accept Jesus as personal Savior. Christ was raised from the dead so that God might call us declared righteous through faith in HIM.

The old rugged cross and the open tomb are one, because the old rugged cross and the open tomb are the crucified risen Jesus Christ – the gospel in a nut shell, Christ died, was buried, He rose again and was seen.

I trust that you have made that once-for-all decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. He died on the cross, was buried, and rose again for you – so you could have His forgiveness and eternal life. But you have to reach out and take His eternal gift He is offering you. As many as received HIM (that is Christ), He gave the authority to become children of God, become members of His eternal family.

Pray for my friend, I mentioned above. He needs to see his need of the Savior.

Since the crucified Christ has risen from the dead bodily,

4. We can know why we are here on planet earth.

(1) The negative.

What is the main reason people live today?

Basically it's for themselves, and their families, their jobs. To have some enjoyment through various experiences. The man I talked to this week, talked about wanting to be with his children. His father had died before he even retired. So he wanted to be able to retire and still have some life left.

But everything centered around himself and his family. That was all he had. Which is certainly a great treasure and relationship.

But that is as far as it went. Everything was related to time. Really the man was in time's box in which one day he would pass from this life.

What about eternity? Is it possible for a person in time to be connected with eternity, and live for eternity while living in time?

YES!!! That's what the bodily resurrection of Christ is all about.

(2) The positive.

Once a person accepts Christ as personal Savior, the believer learns that now with Christ living in him, he is linked with eternity and can do his various tasks in time to count for eternity. Only the bodily resurrected Christ provides the believer that eternal privilege and responsibility.

Paul it this way in II Corinthians 5:15:

"And He (that is Christ) died for all, so that they who live (who know Christ personally) might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."

Now whatever thinks or does can have eternal meaning and purpose, for the believer is not doing for one's self but for the Lord – and what one does counts for eternity.

That's why Paul tells us in Colossians 3:23,

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

The question to each of us on this Resurrection Day is this:

Who are you working for as follower of Jesus Christ? Yourself or Jesus?

Why do we get tired of serving the Lord?

Why do we start grumbling sometimes in our walk with the Lord?
 Why do we get to that place sometimes and say, "Let someone else do the job."
 Why do we start gossiping about someone?

Why do we have such thoughts and display such actions at times?

We begin having the attitude of selfishness, which is sin, not using the resurrection mind of Christ we have in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It all comes down to our attitude. Do we use the mind of Christ he has given us in the Spirit's power. Or do I react in the old nature which causes me to lose heart and try to blame someone else for my challenges.

I discovered this week that it is attitude that's where it's at. Through a set of circumstances, I had to check my attitude and let the Lord work out the details, which he did, and I was the one who benefited.

What's the outcome of serving the Lord with the attitude that I am doing it for HIM?

God is glorified. He is shown off in the believer's life.

That's why the I Corinthians 10:31 – "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Only the bodily resurrection of Christ – yes, the risen Christ living in the believer provides the believer that awesome privilege and responsibility.

That's why Paul tells us to be continually steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (that is continually going above and beyond what is expected of you), know that your toil (your hard work) is not vain (not fruitless) in the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).

Finally, since Christ has conquered the grave bodily,

5. We can know where we are going after this life.

This is the believer's resurrection hope – It is a living hope as Peter stated.

(1) It is the hope that when the body of the believer dies, his spirit goes into the presence of the Lord.

II Corinthians 5:8 – to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

(2) It is the hope that when Christ returns for His church, He will bring with Him those who are with Him, raising their bodies to new bodies like His, then joined with their spirits. Those on earth who love the Lord will be taken with Him joining those raised from dead.

I Thessalonians 4:12-18 is the teaching.

"For if we believe that Jesus dies and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." Then the dead in Christ will rise first, and we who remain will be caught up in the air to be with the Lord, and so shall we always be with the Lord.

Paul in I Corinthians 15:52 says that this coming of Christ and the raising of the dead in Christ, and the taking of those alive with Him, will be in the twinkling of an eye.

What a future God has in store for the believer in Jesus Christ based upon the bodily resurrection of His Son, and our Savior through faith in Him.

But it doesn't stop there.

(3) It is the hope of some day reigning on earth with Christ during His 1000 year reign of Christ (Revelation 20).

(4) It is the hope of some day living forever with the Lord in the new heaven and earth which He will bring into existence (Revelation 21-22).

All that God does for the believer in Jesus Christ on the old rugged cross through the open tomb is based upon His bodily resurrection. Past, Present, and Future are a reality because of the resurrected Christ.

The stone has been rolled back from the Tomb. The Tomb is now empty. We live for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit keeping an ear tuned to the trumpet sound, which could happen any time.

I understand that possums are smart animals. You wouldn't think so because you hardly ever see one except when it's dead on the road. There's a joke that goes, "why did the chicken cross the road? To prove to the possum that it could be done!"

But possums, it turns out, are smart. They won't enter a hole if there's just one set of tracks going into it. They know there's something in there. But if there are two sets of tracks. The possum will enter and not be afraid.

The message of Easter is that we can enter the grave - we don't have to fear death because there are tracks leading out of the tomb. Paul preached the proclamation of Easter - "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What powerful and victorious words on this resurrection Sunday, "Jesus is risen!"

In his day, Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin was one of the most powerful men on earth. Bukharin was a Russian Communist leader who took part in the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. He was editor of the Soviet newspaper Pravda and was a member of the Politburo. His works on economics and political science were big sellers.

A story is told about a journey he took from Moscow to Kiev in 1930 to address a huge assembly on the subject of atheism. Addressing the crowd, he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity hurling insult, argument and proof against it.

An hour later, he was finished. He looked out at what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of men's faith. "Are there any questions?" Bukharin demanded. Deafening silence filled the auditorium, but then one man stood. He surveyed the crowd, first to the left then to the right. Finally he shouted the ancient greeting known well in the Russian Orthodox Church: "CHRIST IS RISEN!" En masse the crowd arose as one man and the response came crashing like the sound of thunder: "HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

Let's praise the Lord today that His bodily resurrection is not a rough draft, but the real thing, while putting together our past, present, and future in HIMSELF!

Let's live in His victorious resurrection life and power this week to the glory of God!