

Introduction:

- After starting a new diet I altered my drive to work to avoid passing my favorite bakery. I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning and as I approached, there in the window were a host of chocolates, donuts, and cheesecakes. I felt this was no accident, so I prayed ... "Lord, it's up to You. If You want me to have any of those delicious goodies, create a parking place for me directly in front of the bakery." And sure enough, on the eighth time around the block, there it was! God is so good!
- I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places.
- Worrying works! Case in point: 90% of the things I worry about never happen.
- *"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* (John 20:30-31, ESV)
- John's goal is that we may believe! It is the whole purpose of writing his Gospel.
 - And in believing you may have life in His name.
 - This is what John was after. This is what I am after this morning. I want everyone to believe...in the Lord Jesus Christ and surrender their lives to Him. From Good Friday to Resurrection Sunday it is all about the cross and the resurrection.

I. The Cross and Resurrection

- A. The Cross demonstrated His Love *"but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8, ESV)
- B. The Resurrection proves He has power to save. That is what we celebrate today, because He lives proves He has power to save!
- C. But the big question is: Saved from what? Sin is the easy answer.
 1. Being lost - to be lost is to not be in the right place. Ie. Luke 15:1-ff
 - a) Lost sheep - wondered off and couldn't get back.
 - b) Lost coin - was lost and did not know it. Thinks its good, has value...
 - c) Lost son - made bad choices and wound up broke and broken and far from Father.
 2. Being condemned - *"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."* (John 3:18, ESV). Ie. Someone may say, I believe in God. How are you defining believe? But if you believe and your life does not show you believe, you have a problem. Same problem demons have. *"You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!"* (James 2:19, ESV)
 3. Under Wrath - *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."* (John 3:36,

ESV)

4. Death - *"I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."* (John 8:24, ESV). Death has to do with separation.
5. Darkness - without light. *"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil."* (John 3:19, ESV)

II. Unbelief Is Our Obstacle.

A. Unbelief is our obstacle.

1. Unbelief stands in the way of our receiving all that Jesus took back at the cross! The reason unbelief is our problem is because it is at the very root of being lost, being condemned, being under wrath, and being spiritually dead and separated from God.
2. We heard that in the scriptures I just shared. I.e. Remember, John is writing his Gospel so that we would believe!
3. I.e. Scriptural illustration. *"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?'"* because of your unbelief, your lack of faith. (Matthew 17:19, ESV)

B. The cross demonstrates God's love. And the resurrection of Jesus is meant to prove something:

1. The resurrection proves He is alive and deals with our unbelief.
2. The resurrection proves He dealt with our sin and with death, hell and the grave. Victoriously!
3. The resurrection declares: *"that by believing you may have life in his name."* (John 20:30-31, ESV)

C. Unbelief was the problem of the first resurrection day. Jesus is so gracious to deal with our unbelief! They had to see to believe. Let's look at the first day of the resurrection.

1. Early in the morning 20:1. Early in the morning Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb.

a) Mary of Magdalene -

(1) First to the tomb. Unbelief - she is going to finish preparing the body of Jesus for the grave.

(a) His body is gone! She runs to tell Peter and John.

(b) To the "Gardener" where is he? I will get him. She believed him dead. She did not believe him to be alive.

(c) Jesus calls her name! *"Mary."* Now she believes! She had to see to believe.

(2) First to preach the Gospel. 20:18 She announced to the disciples

- (doubters), "**I have seen the Lord!**"
- b) Peter and John -
 - (1) saw and believed (vs. 8). Saw and believed He was gone.
 - (2) They returned home vs. 9 but they did not tell or announce anything!
 - 2. That evening: *On the evening of that day*. 20:19
 - a) Ten were in the upper room.
 - b) Jesus appears to them and announces, "**Peace be with you!**" Check out my scars.
 - c) Again, he says, "**Peace be with you!**"
 - (1) He commissions them. You have resurrection power now! "**As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.**" vs. 21
 - (2) He breaths out and says, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.**"
 - (a) All who believe are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Eph 4:30
 - (b) They believe and they received! They saw Jesus and believed. A pattern is developing. And Jesus is out to break this pattern.
 - (3) The 10 say to Thomas, "**We have seen the Lord!**" Like Mary they are now preaching. They are testifying of the risen Lord!
 - (4) Thomas' response: "**Unless I see His scars and touch them, I will never believe.**" (Unbelief) That is unbelief. Disbelief. No faith.
 - D. Eight days later the 11 are together. Doors are locked. Jesus appears with them! Exact repeat!
 - 1. Jesus appears to them and announces, "**Peace be with you!**"
 - 2. And He says to Thomas, "**Put your finger here!**" Touch my scars! "**Do not disbelieve, but believe.**"
 - a) Thomas believes! "My Lord and My God!" He identifies Jesus as Lord and God! Because he has seen, His faith is real!
 - b) Notice what Jesus asks him, "**Have you believed because you have seen me?**"
 - c) And Jesus makes a powerful statement! "**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!**" This brings the issue of faith and unbelief to our doorstep this morning.
 - E. 2024 years later, You and I -
 - 1. Unbelief is still our enemy/our obstacle that keeps us from receiving.
 - 2. Testimony - hearing the word. Faith comes by hearing the message. (Ro 10:17)
 - a) Testimony "these are written" is the telling of what God has done for you.
 - b) "**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!**"
 - c) You believed and something happened on your insides!

III. The Necessity Of Faith

- A. Faith is key to receiving from God.

1. Faith allows us to access the supernatural ability of God. We call that grace: God's ability in me to do what I cannot do in and of myself.
2. Mary said to the angel Gabriel, *"Let it be unto me according to your word."*
- B. Heb 11, *"By faith...."*
- C. Seeing isn't believing, believing is seeing!
- D. It is our faith that lets us experience His resurrection today and leads us to be sharers of the Gospel!
- E. Our job, our response is to believe.

Conclusion:

- *"Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.""* (John 6:29, ESV)
- *"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,"* (John 1:12, ESV). You receive Him. You believe in His name. You become children of God.
- *"but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* John 20:31
 - Believe that Jesus is the Christ
 - Believe that Jesus is the Son of God
 - By believing you have life in His name.

The plain fact is that all told we read of five appearances on the one day (to Mary Magdalene, to the women, to the two on the way to Emmaus, to Peter, and to the ten)