

Theme: After Resurrection Sunday - Let Us Rise

Scripture Text: 2 Cor. 2:14 – 17

Introduction: On Resurrection Sunday, we joined the rest of the Christian Community across the world in celebration of what to us is perhaps the most important event in Christian history: **Jesus rising from the dead**. All of Christianity hinges on the fact of the resurrection. If Jesus has not risen from the grave, then our faith has no meaning ... is just another interesting philosophy.

The resurrection is the clearest proof that Jesus is exactly who he claimed to be – the Son of God and the Savior of the world and yet they are many who ask the question – **After Easter What?**

In the passage of scripture used as our opening text the Apostle Paul is commenting on what can be considered The Confidence of the Apostolic Ministry which is victory in Christ; he says “... ***thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ ...***” - **2Cor. 2:14**.

The picture here is that of a Roman captain leading his captives in triumph.

In **2Cor 3** Paul emphasized that we are “... ***manifestly epistles of Christ ... written not on tablets of stone ... but of flesh ... which is the heart.***”

The Apostle, as we also must, considered himself as one of Christ’s captives being led in triumph, to the glory of God in Christ whose resurrection we celebrate.

Jason Soroski – Worship Pastor at Calvary Longmont Church in Colorado; is quoted as saying “... The death and resurrection of Jesus means that there is hope in this hopeless world; that there truly is a God; and that not only does he understand us, but he became one of us. He took our sins upon himself and is alive today ...”.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I have chosen as the theme for our discussion today; **After Resurrection Sunday - Let Us Rise**.

My purpose here, is to challenge my believing hearers to look beyond Easter Sunday; and in response to the question – **After Easter What? To Rise Up** in the power of Christ’s Resurrection and firmly establish our commitment to Christ’s

mission of drawing men unto Himself ... As is recorded of Jesus himself in **Jn. 12:32 – “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself”**.

This same gospel, when ministered by those who are willing and are endued with resurrection power, brings life to those who desire to receive it.

The challenge of **Matt. 28: 19** is to ‘Go’ ... ‘Rise Up’ and make disciples of all nations ...

They are three challenges that I want to share which would aid us in this effort.

The commitment to Christ’s mission requires the we:-

I. Rise Up in Declaration of Our Victory – Acts- 2:23, 24; 1Cor. 15: 54 – 57; Jn. 12:31; 2Cor. 2: 14 –17.

The death of Jesus Christ is symbolic of ‘**the death of death itself**’. This death of deaths means victory over death for those who trust in Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The resurrection story is then, is a testimony of Christ’s victory over death as is seen in **Acts 2:24 “... it was not possible that He should be held by death ...”**

Rom. 8: 11 reminds us that *“ if the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you”*.

The latter part of 1Cor. 15:54 Paul declares “... Death is swallowed up in victory...” in **V. 55** he exclaims *“O death where’s your sting? O death where’s your victory?”*

Again in **V. 57** – he expresses his gratitude to God when he wrote these words, *“... thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ...”*

The victory which God wrought in Christ was on our behalf.

A. It is a victory over **Death and Hell...** so that we having been in-dwelt with the same resurrection power, Death and Hell have no power over us.

In **Jn. 12: 31** we get another picture of this victory that is ours; that verse states that *“Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out”*.

Here the word reminds us that God will bring this world into judgement, and that the ruler of this world – **Satan, will be cast out forever.**

B. This victory that is ours. It is a victory over **Satan and the World.**

2Cor. 2:14 confronts us with the fact that God “... **always leads us in triumph in Christ and through us spreads the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.**

The fragrance of the knowledge of God in Christ in every place, is the downfall of the world’s influence.

Our victory in the resurrected Christ is a victory over Death and Hell; it’s a victory over Satan and his System.

Let us then Rise Up and declare with all boldness that our victory is secured in the resurrected Christ.

Let me further suggest that our commitment to Christ’s mission demands that we:-

II. Rise Up in the Display of Our Validation – Matt. 28: 18; Lk. 6: 46 – 48; Jn 15: 5

The message of **Matt. 28:18** is that the resurrected Christ is vested with all authority ... ***“All power (Authority) is given to me in heaven and on earth ...”***

We who are the called of God are validated not by our own strengths, but we speak and perform as we are vested with the power of God in Christ which makes us who we are.

In **Lk. 6: 46** Christ asks the question: ***“Why do you call me Lord and do not do the things which I say?”***

Christ demonstrates here, the folly of professing Him as Lord, but not living life as if He is really Lord – ***“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”***

Our security and our strengths are founded on the foundation of God’s word. Christ Himself said in **Jn. 15:5** ***“I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”***

It is in Christ that find our validation and not in ourselves ... It is not by power or by might, but by my spirit says the Lord

Therefore then, let us rise up and display by our living, that we stand on our faith in God who raised Christ from the grave.

Allow me to share this last challenge with you ... Our commitment to the mission of Christ further challenges us to:-

III. Rise Up in Demonstration of our Vindication – Matt. 16: 21; 28: 6; Is. 54:17; Phil. 1: 19 - 21

The resurrection of Christ is a testimony of vindication. In **Matt. 16: 21** Christ gave some very specific details as it related to His Death; but one cannot help but to notice that He also predicted His resurrection - He informed his followers that He had to go to Jerusalem to suffer “ *... and be killed ... and be raised again the third day ...*”

In **Matt. 28: 6** the angel said to the women “**He is not here; for He is risen as He said**”. This simply stated fact is vindication for Christ.

The Devil thought he had Him, but Christ defied him and brought his plans to naught when He came stepping out of that tomb ... the angels rejoiced ... “**He is not here ... He is risen as He said ...**” and this is the basis of the Christian faith.

The Christian Community is faced with this question: **Will we seek vindication in the court of public opinion, or vindication before Christ?** It is easy to seek vindication in public opinion, but our vindication is not from public opinion ... what the world thinks of us matters little for it is God who has the final say.

In **Isaiah. 54:17** the word is “**No weapon formed against you shall prosper ... ever tongue which rises against you in judgement you shall condemn ... This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord ... their righteousness (vindication) is from me says the Lord**”

In **Phil. 1: 19 – 21** we get the picture of Paul about to face trial and In all confidence, at that very moment he declares: “**... I know that this will turn for my salvation (vindication) through your prayers and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ ...**”

In V. 20 he further testifies “... In nothing I shall be ashamed ... Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death ... V. 21 records the real resolve of Paul in these words “... For me to live is Christ ... to die is gain ...”

I love the words in the chorus of the song **Hallelujah We Shall Rise** by J.E. Thomas.

We shall rise hallelujah; We shall rise Amen; We shall rise in that resurrection morning when death’s prison bars are broken,

We shall rise; We shall rise.

Like Christ we too shall rise, we shall rise over all that seek to hold us down; even from death, we shall rise. For our vindication is in God through Christ our resurrected Lord.

Let us then rise up and demonstrate this vindication.

Conclusion: The Commitment of ourselves to a life of making Christ’s mission a success, is the path to living a meaningful life.

Paul told young disciple, Timothy, that he should “*Command*” his ... followers to live like this. He writes in **1Tim. 6: 18, 19**, “***Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of eternal life (the life that is truly life)***”