

RESURRECTION'S CALL

INTRODUCTION

As we celebrate resurrection Sunday today, it's a day of great rejoicing, we can sing the words of the song, "*free, free, forever amen, death was arrested and my life began*". Our Saviour is risen, He is risen indeed.

Sadly, for billions of people throughout the world, this is not a day of rejoicing, it's a commercialized day when people give out chocolate Easter eggs and Bunnies. These have got nothing to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the victory we have because of his empty tomb. They can't sing, "*free, free, forever amen, death was arrested and my life began*" because no-one has taken the time to introduce them to Jesus!

Jesus was crucified for crimes He did not commit so that we can be free from our guilt and shame, but sadly, there is a huge crime being committed today, and it's not the unbelievers that are committing it, it's the believers who are committing it. How? Simply, by not being the witnesses Jesus has called us to be and because of that, we allow these same billions die and spend eternity in Hell. By not being willing to witness, we are committing spiritual genocide.

MESSAGE

RESURRECTION'S CALL

I have titled this message "Resurrection's Call". What do I mean by that? Jesus gave His disciples this Resurrection's call just before His ascension:

Luke 24:46-49 (NKJV) Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

- It was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, **so that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.**
- It was necessary for someone to be witnesses of Christ's death and resurrection and to tell others about it!
- The call of Christ's resurrection is that the Good News could be preached! The news that because Jesus died and rose again, paying the price for mankind's sin, we can be reconciled to God.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RESURRECTION'S CALL

If the Resurrection had a call, someone needed to answer it! Someone was responsible. So who is responsible for this call to preach the Good News and be witnesses for Jesus Christ. **We all know the answer – it's His disciples.**

Matthew 28:16-2 (NKJV) Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

But you may say, that was the original disciples, it's not the current day disciples of Jesus, it's surely not us. I beg to differ, if we go back to the scripture in Luke that I read earlier, it says: **Luke 24:48-49** (NKJV) And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Jesus started speaking about the Promise of His Father, the disciples were to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high.

If we jump to Acts 1, we find those disciples waiting there, just as Jesus instructed them to. They were in the upper room, but now there were no longer only the remaining 11 disciples, this group of disciples had grown:

Acts 1:12-15a Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty),

- Now we find 120 disciples, they were ALL followers of Christ and they were ALL waiting for the Promise of the Father.

And then the promise arrived:

Acts 2:2-4 (NKJV) When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This is the account of the birth of the Christian church. That same day the 120 were filled with the Holy spirit, the "power from on high" as per Acts 8, and immediately Peter preached under the power of the Holy Spirit and 3000 converts joined the church. And they also received the Holy Spirit: **Acts 2:38**

(NKJV) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This gift of the Holy Spirit is the same "power from on high" that Jesus said they must wait for.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

First there were 11, then there were 120, now there were 3120 and they had all received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The **whole church** received the power, it wasn't only the leaders. They **all** had the call to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (NKJV) Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, **and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

You and I today are the continuation of that church, we also have the Holy Spirit, we also have His power, and it's not just to bless us! We are also called to be Jesus witnesses to the nations. The baton has been passed, now you and I carry the ministry of reconciliation.

WE HAVE NO EXCUSES

Proverbs 24:11-12 (NKJV) Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. 12 If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?

- We are all called to deliver those stumbling towards slaughter, they are walking as it were in a drunken stupor into the very pit of hell, and it's our responsibility to reach as many as we possibly can.
- We will also give an account one day! We won't be able to say, "surely we did not know this,". As we sow, so shall we reap.

This scripture says we can't say we didn't know! In this church we have preached over and over about our responsibility to be witnesses.

My challenge this morning is this: Have we been answering Resurrection's call? Have we been telling others the Good News about Jesus, have we been effective witnesses.

THE COP-OUT

How often have you heard it said that all we need to do is live a life that's an example? All we need to do is let others see our example. This is such a cop-out and a deception!

- Jesus did tell us to let our light shine before men in Matthew 5:16, but He didn't only tell us that!
- He said, "Go and make disciples in My name and teach them what I have taught you". This is very different from simply letting our light shine. We no longer have excuses, we need to make disciples and teach them what Jesus said!

Have you taken the cop-out as your sanitizer. Have you been deceived into believing that's all you need to do?

I challenge you today to start speaking out and making disciples!

A WARNING FOR US

Jesus said, "it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish", **but He also said that people would be damned:**

Mark 16:16(NKJV) He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

God doesn't want people to go to hell, but the reality is, many are heading there! **What is hell like?**

Deuteronomy 32:22(AMP) 'For a fire is kindled by My anger, And it burns to the depths of Sheol (the place of the dead, the nether world),

Psalms 55:15 (NKJV) Let death seize them; Let them go down alive into hell, For wickedness is in their dwellings and among them.

Isaiah 5:14 (NKJV) Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself And opened its mouth beyond measure;

Isaiah 66:24 (NKJV) And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Pastor Shirley spoke on Friday about people sitting right here in the church who are like Judas – they have remorse and regret but there's no true repentance! There's religion in your life, but you are not living for Jesus. Today I'm here to tell you that there is a risen Saviour who has paid for your sins but if you do not turn from your wicked ways, you will find yourself spending eternity in hell!

- Young people, if you are standing with one foot in the church and one foot in the popular "in" culture, the immoral life where drunkenness, drugs, wild parties and sex are the norm, you are lukewarm and are headed to hell.

- Men, and ladies. If you are having an affair, coming to church on Sundays and thinking you're OK, you are wrong, you need to repent, ask God to forgive you and turn from your sin otherwise you are going to land up in hell.
- Are there any of these among us: Thieves, wife-beaters, child molesters, murderers? You need to repent, ask God to forgive you and turn from your sin otherwise you are going to land up in hell.

This is the message of the Cross: forgiveness of sin, but if you neglect to partake of the grace and the changed life that comes through Jesus Christ, you are headed straight to hell!

CONCLUSION

I remind you of Jesus words: "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

We have Resurrection's call and we received the Power from on High, it's time for you and I to rise up ourselves and share the good news, being the witnesses Jesus called us to be!

Ezekiel 3:17-18(NKJV) "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me:18 When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

It is our responsibility to respond to resurrection's call. We need to warn people. If we don't their blood will be on our hands. If we do witness and they choose not to respond, then we are freed and will have clean hands!

Today I have also warned you about Hell, I have washed the blood off my hands. If you are a sinner, now is the time repent, to come before God with a broken and repentant heart and receive your forgiveness and cleansing.