

**Sermon Title: "The Resurrection Effect" Series: "Reconciled. Meditations on the Life & Death of Jesus"**  
**Pastor Dave Sattler April 5, 2015 Text: John 20 Sources:** NIV Life Application Bible; Commentaries: Gary Burge, Frank Gaebelain, & Leon Morris; John MacArthur's "Twelve Ordinary Men"; Mardi's Sermon (NSAC, Mar 29/2015); Dr John A Beck.

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## Review & Introduction:

- Good morning everyone, I'm Dave Sattler, one of the pastors here at NSAC.
- With the special privilege of speaking today on Resurrection Sunday.
- **<Series Slide>** The Easter Narrative deals with all humanity's need for reconciliation.
- And God's surprising plan? Send His Son Jesus ... to live, to die, and to rise again.
- Like today, "resurrection nay-sayers" abounded in the ancient world. Greek philosophers believed one's soul lived on after death, but this idea of a body being raised from the dead?
- Completely absurd! And God makes what the world deems 'hogwash' -- the linchpin.
- A victim of hideous & humiliating crucifixion at the hands of the Romans, one of the fiercest empires of all time, now becomes the unexpected hero to reconcile us & all creation back to God.
- And the resurrection clinches it.
- It's why Paul says in Romans 6:4, Q: "We were therefore buried with Jesus through baptism into death in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life.**"
- **<Slide>** To whet your appetite for the Bible passage, let's start with a fun 'Straw-Poll':
- Question #1: At a crime-scene, are you the type of person who?
  - A) Bails for fear of being charged 'guilty by association,' or B) Sticks around to solve the case.
- **<Slide>** Question #2: How would you react if a dead person showed up at one of your meetings?
  - A) Greet them in a calm voice, or B) Dismiss what your eyes see.
  - [Some of you were hoping for C) Scream & run! Not an option.]
- **<Slide>** Question #3: What do you like to do to people who miss meetings?
  - A) Vote them President, or B) Make them bring snacks for a year.
- **<Slide>** Question #4: People who believe without seeing. Are they?
  - A) Naive, or B) Trusting. [If you voted B), you're a little naive!]
- **<Slide>** Today Jesus continues to be a polarizing character just like He was that first Passion Week, seeming to call out to onlookers, 'Crown Me or kill Me!' ... as Mardi said last week.
- BQ: So, what kind of King would Jesus be? Causing 'seismic' stirs in Jerusalem, on Palm Sunday He rides into town to much fanfare ... not on a warhorse, but on the back of a small donkey.
- Jesus refuses to rise to the expectations of even His closest confidantes.
- They wish to be liberated - long for the Lion to take His rightful place on the throne because He has the power to do so. Instead, surprisingly Jesus becomes the Lamb Who was slain, willingly giving up His life to death on a Cross.
- It's at Golgotha where Jesus' crowd of puzzled followers are revealed for who they really are: simply admirers -- 'bandwagon-jumpers' ... quick to abandon Him when things don't go as they hope.
- Precious few remain. And we're still in that darkness of Easter Saturday when it comes to ...
- **<Slide>** John 20. I invite you to turn to it now in the new blue Bibles or on your electronic device.
- Here the writer tells the story of the resurrection's effect on human personalities.
- While it takes some convincing, perhaps the greatest proof of the resurrection is its dynamic effect on Jesus' immediate circle.
- For John, himself an eyewitness, his resurrected Lord was a concrete reality burned deeply in his consciousness; he would never forget this life-altering truth and wanted it to be part of everyone's faith. And so we come to Resurrection Sunday.
- **<READ John 20>** Prayer: "God, control me by Your Spirit and move me out of the way."

## Sermon Outline:

### 1. **<Slide> From Confusion to Clarity (20:1-18)**

- Full of grief, in the dark confusion of that morning, a very unlikely person -- a woman who held no official position in Jesus' cabinet and was not His mother [though she bore the same name], trudged to the tomb.

- Perhaps paying her final respects ... or coming to complete the burial process preempted by Sabbath or held up by the "seventy-five pounds" of "myrrh and aloes" (19:39) that surely would have taken a long while to administer ... we're not sure why she's there.
- ILL - A year and a half ago we visited a 1st Century Jewish tomb <Slide> dug up here on the outskirts of Jerusalem. For sure, not the one where Jesus' body laid. But it helps us visualize.
  - Of course, this would have been covered over by the mountain to form a cave.
  - To keep animals out, a rolling stone or hinged stone would have protected the entrance.
  - The U-shaped slab is the 'preparation bench' for wrapping and spicing.
  - Behind, the 'niches' in the cave are where fully-prepared bodies were then placed for burial.
  - The body of Jesus likely never made it into one of those holes.
- Upon arrival, the disciples are amazed to find things different from how they'd left them 2 days ago:
  - The Temple guard is gone. The seal Pilate ordered on the tomb to prevent any tampering is broken. The stone's removed from the entrance. The body of Jesus is gone.
  - And His grave-clothes are lying neatly on the slab!
- Clearly believing she's come across a crime-scene not a resurrection, the woman says to Peter & John, Q: "They have taken the Lord ... and we don't know where they have put him!" (2)
- After a brief investigation, the other disciples mysteriously check out and head home, but she stands "outside the tomb crying." (11) Little Sattler tip: Never leave the scene of a crime.
- Good thing too. Looking into the tomb and only hearing a voice, she doesn't realize it's Him and thinks He's the gardener, Q: "Tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." (15)
- Funny, I'm not sure how she planned to haul a full-grown male body covered in heavy spices back to the cave by herself, but you've gotta love her devotion!
- <Slide> Then in an instant, a single word is uttered. Q: "Mary," Jesus said (16).
- In her foggy confusion, **Jesus shows up**, speaks her name, & brings profound clarity.
- APP - And I don't know where you're at today, but I do know this: Jesus calls your name too.
  - Maybe this morning you feel forgotten. Your world is crumbling. God feels distant.
  - Lost in the confusion of it all, you can't make sense ... of the divorce, the illness, the loss of employment. Can't see a way forward. Can't get clarity.
    - I want you to know: Jesus has not forgotten you. You're on His radar.
    - And He can see you through. Help you find your way.
  - Or perhaps today you feel abandoned. 'Torched' by a loved one, a victim of your own bad choices that isolate you, or rocked by what feels like one 'bad break' after another.
    - I want you to know: Jesus has not abandoned you.
    - Even if you could just turn & face Him. In the flow of your tears. The pain of your disappointment. He's right there. Calling your name.
- Cf. John 10 says: "When the Good Shepherd calls His sheep, they know His voice."
- Perhaps it's how Jesus says her name that causes Mary to stop dead in her tracks.
- Could it?! Could it be?! Mary whirls to face Him and knows with certainty it's her esteemed Teacher now resurrected. "I have seen the Lord!" (18) She cannot keep the news to herself.

## 2. <Slide> From Fear to Peace (20:19-23)

- ILL - In 2013 we'd assembled the best NSA Church Soccer Team ever.
  - To go along with our usual ragtag bunch of old men (me included) ...
  - We'd 'providentially' acquired: Martin Rennie, coach of the Whitecaps, a South African called Craig Timm, & a massive Viking named Marius.
  - We'd reached the stretch-drive in our schedule, but things hadn't gone as planned.
  - Having just been beaten 5-nil we were now playing that same top team again 3 nights later.
  - This time in their barn. On the road. In Richmond. With only 10 men. Or so we thought.
  - We gathered in the dressing room and honestly our hope was low. Our opponent, daunting.
  - Until, quite unexpectedly, this man, Paul Ritchie walks in!
  - Former Scottish International, played in the Premiership, and an absolute beast of a man, he too had been added to the roster, but hadn't been able to make it out much.

- And when Ritchie showed up, our belief grew exponentially. Of course, his 2 crunching header-goals helped that night too. Turned our whole season around.
- 6 weeks later we won our one and only Cup in 17 years!
- **<Slide>** Really, this meeting in John 20 could be viewed as 'the hinge of history.'
- Doors are locked. Fears abound.
- The disciples had narrowly escaped arrest, their leader has just been brutally, publicly executed, and they were down a man: tragically lost their treasurer to betrayal and suicide.
- They were likely meeting to concoct a plan to slip out of Jerusalem quietly without attracting more negative attention from the Jewish leaders, Temple police, & Roman authorities.
- And then, **Jesus shows up**. Quite unexpectedly.
- A formerly dead guy busts in and twice reassures them, "Peace be with you!" (19 & 21) Peace flows from His tangible presence. And with Jesus in the room there is always reason for hope.
- **<Slide>** APP - I realize this is very subjective evidence, but my life too has been transformed by the peace only the presence of Jesus can bring.
  - In the shadow of death & loss, I have been touched by the peace of Jesus.
  - Staring at the 'mountain' of my own fears ... when I'm hurting deeply, afraid of being rejected, when some of my decisions have turned into dismal failures, when my own sin has put me in trouble, Jesus' peace has always brought me back.
  - When I've been rocked with heavy anxiety about things I can't control ... like my finances, my housing, my friendships, my health, my future, I have been reassured by the presence of Jesus. Paul calls it, Q: "peace that 'transcends all understanding'" (Phil 2:9).
  - And, it's for you today too ... no matter your deepest fear.
- The effect of the resurrected Christ showing up at a meeting of fearful disciples is nothing short of cataclysmic: it turns disillusioned, broken, tails-between-their-legs followers into radical missionaries.
- And even martyrs, who now give their lives -- literally, to tell the story of Jesus.
- Now, why would the disciples give their lives en masse for a lie?
- Without the resurrection, there'd be zero motivation for mission.
- But, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, their testimonies become the greatest mission strategy this world has ever seen ... as well as perhaps the greatest proof for the resurrection.
- John sums up their influence & the influence of all who've followed Jesus in history; Rev 12:11 says, Q: The devil is "overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." Wow!

### 3. **<Slide> From Doubt to Conviction (20:24-29)**

- Poor Thomas somehow missed the meeting.
- Thomas is that deeply-committed 'process guy' on your Board. He's poured over the meeting minutes, 'We have seen the Lord,' and the motion: 'to accept Jesus as resurrected.' But he's not voting in favour, Q: "Unless I see ... [I'm not buying it!] ... I will not believe it." (25b)
- In ways, his response is good. He wants to see for himself.
- In other ways, Thomas' faith is weak. For many millions of believers have never gotten -- or seemed to need -- what he received that day: his own physical encounter with the risen Jesus.
- Reality is, Q: "Some people need to doubt before they believe." - NIV Life App, p 1928.
- When skepticism leads to questions and propels us to an honest seeking of answers with an openness to accept new ideas beyond ourselves, that's 'good doubt', as far as I'm concerned.
- But when doubt leads to stubbornness -- even bitterness, its not a good thing.
- Incidentally, this is most atheists I know: deeply hurt by life. And consequently, they've 'closed themselves off' from the possibility of a God who doesn't with human reason ever fully make sense.
- **<Slide>** ILL - It's also important to note: doubt is not necessarily the opposite of faith.
  - I get a bit tense when people tell me they've got Christianity all intellectually-sorted and have no doubts about Jesus or their relationship with Him. This is definitely not my story.
  - I actually don't believe faith in Jesus is 100% explainable. If there's not a shade of doubt or some questions we can't fully figure out, then there's no need then to 'jump out' in faith.
  - And faith is exactly what Jesus calls for. Faith 'like a child's faith' (Lk 18:7).
    - Naive? Maybe. Or, trusting? Depends how you look at it.

- And yet again, **Jesus shows up <Slide>** focused on Thomas' needs, longing to do what it takes -- even tailor-make a 'proof-test' -- to move him toward conviction.
- Almost welcoming his doubt, Jesus says, Q: "Put your finger here ... Reach out your hand. [Thomas], Stop doubting and believe." (27) And, at the sight of Jesus, Thomas' doubts vanish and his tests don't matter anymore, Q: 'My Lord and my God!" (28). Reluctant Thomas is won over.
- Ironic! Q: 'The most adamant doubter now utters the deepest confession.' - Burge, p 563
- APP - Perhaps you too today have huge doubts about the validity, identity, or life-mission of Jesus.
  - In your mind, to put your faith in the Jesus of the Christian Story equals 'intellectual suicide.'
  - Yet ... there is a twinge of doubt in the back of your mind. In the pit of your heart.
  - Maybe at times you've had 'inner feelings' or awareness of God's presence -- in nature, when you've prayed those desperate prayers, the odd occasion in church, in a song, or when you've read something, or when you've confided in a Christian friend or family member.
  - But you continue to deny your need for God; or suppress it & try to 'gut it out' on your own.
  - My encouragement to you is this:
    - Ask Jesus to reveal Himself. Tell Him your doubts. Blurt out your questions.
    - Honestly invite Jesus to show up in your life. And, I'm convinced He will!

#### 4. <Slide> New Life in His Name (20:30-31)

- There are movements afoot within Christianity today to toss out the resurrection.
- Along with Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, it's all 'rainbows & unicorns!'
- Fantasy! Couldn't happen! Jesus was just a moral teacher or wise prophet to admire.
- But, without the resurrection, there's no reconciliation of our messy relationships, no transformation of our brokenness, no freedom from the sin that enslaves us, and no mission to give our lives to.
- No Christian faith. This is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:14,
  - Q: "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."
- Witnessed in the testimonies of Mary, the disciples, & Thomas, Q: "Only when we **encounter Jesus personally** are we able to accept the fact of the resurrection." - NIV Life App, p 1925
- To deny the resurrection is really to keep Jesus at 'arm's length' and miss out on what John implies is the whole point here: "by believing" we get new "life in His name" (31).
- <Slide> ILL - One great example of this new life found in Jesus is ...
  - The testimony of my friend, James Lazeo. James comes now to share his story.
- <Slide> If you're new to Christianity, or just checking it out. It's tough to grasp. I get it. Far from trivial, it takes a lifetime really to comprehend this amazing story. Jesus gets it too. It's a process.
- Even the disciples -- who witnessed it all with their very own eyes -- took a lot of effort to convince.
- Think of Peter. John 20 wasn't even enough.
- There had to be a John Chapter 21 for Peter. Sometime later, 200km away at his 'office' on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus hunted him down for one more chat.
- APP - Amidst confusion, fear, & doubt, the 'game-changer' is: when **Jesus shows up**.
  - And I believe this is still true today! Entirely possible! And I invite you into the process.
  - Jesus' presence can make all the difference in your life.
  - Not sure I could ever present you enough objective criteria to argue you into faith in Jesus.
  - Or, bombard you with enough historical or Biblical references to get you there.
  - I probably can't even sway you with my story or 'love you with the love of Jesus' enough to get you to believe. Or, lead you into a spiritual experience real enough to convince you.
  - Ultimately, it's only Jesus showing up -- now by His Spirit touching your spirit, saying,
    - Q: "I'm real. I'm here. I've done it all for you. I'm your Guy. Trust Me. Don't just admire Me, follow Me. Put your whole hope in Me." Jesus says, Q: "And I will give you life -- new life, like you've never before imagined!" Amen.