

Chapter 27: He is Risen!

1. We've got to see the _____.

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Job 19:25-27

For You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay,

Psalm 16:10

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Daniel 12:2-3

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand."

Isaiah 53:10

Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

John 14:19

2. The _____ of the resurrection.

If Christ was not resurrected then your faith is worthless and you and I are still dead in our sins. For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ was not raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your trust in God is useless. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished! And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world.

But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again. Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man. But all who are related to Christ, the other man, will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised first; then when Christ comes back, all his people will be raised.

Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ, the man from heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:13-14, 17-20, 22-23, 49

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:26

#1 { *When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord: I am a sinful man!”*

Luke 5:4-8

#2 { *“I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.*

John 21:3-6

3. Even the _____ act of worship can lead to life-changing release.

The most radical thing you can do for God, is the _____
He tells you to do.

Today’s Equipping Point

Take one small step of _____

“For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much...”

Luke 7:47

➔ Forgiveness is _____—Jesus had already forgiven Peter before the conversation. Forgiveness that’s conditional is just _____.

➔ When others accuse us, or betray us, our response cannot be _____.
It’s never as important to be _____ as it is to be _____.

➔ Your response to an injustice is a key indicator of your _____ for ministry.

Discussion Questions

1. How has *The Story* given you a “big picture” you didn’t have before?
2. To what failure in your life has Jesus responded, “Feed my sheep”?
3. How can you change your attitude/outlook to be more fruitful in ministry?

Teaching Script

They were ashamed, afraid, and absent. Mere hours after they pledged never to leave Jesus—even to die with Him—the Eleven were nowhere near the cross as the sun began to set. But the Roman soldiers were still there, and pierced his side to prove Jesus was very, very dead. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were an unlikely duo show up at the cross. These two members of the Sanhedrin shed their secret discipleship and took responsibility for burying Jesus' body. Wrapping Him in enough spices for a king, they laid him in a nearby tomb. Remembering Jesus' words, the Jewish authorities and Pilate secured the tomb and posted a guard there to keep the 3-day resurrection story from gaining any traction.

Early Sunday morning, a small band of faithful women carrying spices approached His tomb, wondering who could remove the rock that sealed the entrance. Imagine their shock as an angel announced to them that Jesus was not there, "He is risen, just as He said!" Hearing the news, Peter and John sprinted to the tomb. They, too, found it empty. As Mary Magdalene remained there weeping, Jesus appeared to her.

Later the same day, an unrecognized Jesus approached two downcast disciples on the road to Emmaus. They said all of Jerusalem was abuzz with the events of the last three days, and the One whom they had trusted to redeem Israel had been crucified, and they were disappointed. Some silly women even had an unbelievable angelic vision, and the tomb was empty. With all these confusing stories, what's a guy to do except head home to Emmaus? Jesus admonished the two for their unbelief, and then He used Moses and the Prophets to teach them about the Messiah. After eating with them, when their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, He disappeared from their sight. But they finally got it! With a lot of tutoring, they finally got it! So they headed back to Jerusalem at full speed to report their experience to the Eleven. Then Jesus appeared to them as well, and after assuring them He was not a ghost, He did the same thing again: He re-explained the Old Testament in light of all that had happened, and opened their minds so they too finally understood.

This brings us to point #1 on your outlines:

1. We've got to see the *big picture*.

[Hold up The Story]

What Jesus did, both for the disciples headed to Emmaus, and for the Eleven, was to tell them "*The Story*"—he contextualized everything that had happened so they could understand the purpose for which he had died, and then raised. Because they had seen Jesus through the lens of the Messiah they wanted and expected, these events made no sense at all. A military or political Deliverer would never make his demise the point of his mission.

But Jesus took them to "hot-air balloon level" to see the big picture. He helped them see that Israel had never kept the Law very well even on their best days. And when they didn't, they had this makeshift, stopgap mechanism to cleanse people of their sins, which had to be repeated over and over again. It never quite did the job, but it was a precursor to a once-for-all, permanent atonement. This one-time sacrifice wouldn't just address the

problem of sins over the last year, but would provide forgiveness prospectively, covering all the sins you would commit in the future, justifying the believer once for all time.

What He had done was to put everything they knew from Jewish historical writings into context and a frame of reference that made sense to them. As He told them “*The Story*”, the light bulbs over their heads started turning on.

It wasn't like a resurrection was a foreign topic. There are several Scriptures from the Old Testament that alluded to it.

Maybe He quoted Job:

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
Job 19:25-27

Perhaps he quoted David:

For You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.
Psalm 16:10

Peter later referred to this passage in his powerful Pentecost sermon.

Maybe He reminded them of the angel's words to Daniel:

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.
Daniel 12:2-3

Perhaps even His own Suffering Servant prophecy in Isaiah:

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.
Isaiah 53:10

For sure, I'm guessing that Jesus reminded them of His words just three days before:

Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.
John 14:19

This leads us right into the second key point:

2. The **centrality** of the resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ is, after all, a non-negotiable. Without it, the gospel just crumbles into just another hyped up tale of a guy who claimed to be a god. But we see the resurrection is even more than the cornerstone of the gospel: by Jesus' grace, it is **the inheritance of every believer**.

Read with me from 1 Corinthians:

If Christ was not resurrected then your faith is worthless and you and I are still dead in our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17

For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ was not raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your trust in God is useless. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished! And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world.

But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again. Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man. But all who are related to Christ, the other man, will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised first; then when Christ comes back, all his people will be raised.

Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ, the man from heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:13-14, 17-20, 22-23, 49

Jesus' resurrection means for each one of us that our death, while certain, need not be permanent. The two resurrections, Christ's and ours, stand or fall together. Only by dying could He then be raised, and in conquering death, He showed us we could as well, because Satan was stripped and rendered powerless over the destiny of those who believed. Hebrews says:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15

because...

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:26

Jesus broke Satan's power over spiritual death on the cross, and then in the empty tomb. And later, at the end of time, Satan will be permanently divested of his power over death when Jesus delivers the kingdom to his Father and the New Jerusalem descends from heaven.

It's really important to see the big picture, and to understand the centrality of the resurrection.

But we should also pay attention to the events surrounding Jesus' appearances after He rose—because it's in those conversations we find healing, salve for the wounds of our sin, and miracles to inspire us to be witnesses for Him the rest of our lives. Remember we've said before that Jesus wastes nothing—and true to form, these post-resurrection encounters are rich with meaning and depth.

You'll remember that after His appearance to the Eleven, Jesus appeared to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee.

It's not often Jesus performed the same miracle twice, but in the beginning of Luke's gospel and the end of John's, He book-ended his ministry with similar miracles. The first time was in Luke 5: Jesus had been preaching and He got into Peter's boat. Here's what happened:

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord: I am a sinful man!"

Luke 5:4-8

And now here's the second time, after the Resurrection. One morning Peter said,

"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

John 21:3-6

Look at the significance of what happened: both times the disciples were just making a living. Both times, despite their years of experience and expertise, they caught nothing. And both times, they were asked to defy logic and do something seemingly meaningless.

But both times, absurd as it sounded, the fishermen did as they were told, and both times, miracles happened. This brings us to our **third key point**:

3. Even the smallest act of worship can lead to life-changing release.

Someone once told me **the most radical thing you can do for God, is the very next thing He tells you to do.** For Peter it was a simple act of obedience that rationally made no sense at all. Both times, as they obeyed, miracles happened, and Peter had a ministry he could never have imagined, all because he said yes. All because God can use even the smallest, most insignificant act of worship to change the world.

And for us, that's our **Equipping Point for today**:

Take one small step of obedience.

It may seem silly, like throwing your nets on the other side. Maybe for you it's slowing down to half-pace as you walk through the office or stopping to check on someone. Maybe it's a small bouquet of flowers for your wife for no reason at all. Maybe it's turning off the car stereo and praying on the way home to leave your workday behind. Take one small step of service, of worship, and just see how God can multiply it.

After that breakfast, though, there was one more life-changing encounter.

After they had eaten, Jesus faced down the elephant in the room (or maybe *on the beach*). He knew this conversation with Peter would be awkward and uneasy. Peter had seen Jesus after the resurrection at least twice, perhaps three times, and the subject still hadn't come up. Surely Peter had already beaten himself up over and over for his denials. We can suppose that Peter had real doubt as to where he stood with Jesus. This was a man who would just as soon ignore the elephant, than have to face it.

But when it was time, it's important to notice that Jesus did NOT say "I told you so." He also didn't ask, "How much have you wept? How often have you repented? How much fasting have you done?" Jesus kindly spoke of no probation for Peter's denial, no halfway house, no required restitution.

He only asked, "*Do you love Me?*"

Do you remember the woman who entered the Pharisee's house where Jesus was eating, and anointed His feet with oil? Remember how indignant the Pharisee was that such a woman had touched Jesus? Do you recall Jesus' response?

For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much...

Luke 7:47

Much is forgiven her, not because she wept much, or because she spent much, but because she loved much.

Before Jesus would commit his sheep to Peter's care, He asked him, "Do you love Me?" It was a simple question, but really, for a God of grace, it was the only question that mattered. Those that do not truly love Jesus will never truly love others, nor will they care for others as they should. Nothing but the love of Christ would compel someone to go through the difficulties and discouragements of ministry, of shepherding others, of feeding sheep.

Jesus was gracious enough to put him out of his pain, and confirmed his place as an apostle.

Here Jesus has taught us several things:

- ➔ **Forgiveness is *unconditional***—He had already forgiven Peter before this conversation. For those who have wronged *us*, can we say our forgiveness is independent of their response? I recently had a very difficult conversation—one that was wrenching, and filled with heartache. But I was reminded ahead of time that whatever the response, whatever the outcome, *forgiveness cannot be conditional*. **Forgiveness that's conditional is just *fair warning*.**

➔ **When others accuse us, or betray us, our response cannot be *punitive*.** Taking your pound of flesh after an offense can be temporarily satisfying, but what you are fracturing is the body of Christ. Believe me; I can attest to this personally, as can many of you. I've said this more than once, but we need to write this down as well: **It's never as important to be *right* as it is to be *loving*.** Even if we can prove you are right about something, we must lay that aside; it matters more to be loving and forgiving.

And the last thing we learn from this encounter:

➔ **Your response to an injustice is a key indicator of your *fitness* for ministry.** When Jesus asks us, "Do you love me?" He is asking us not just for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of our sheep—those who lie in our path. I was sharing this difficult conversation I just mentioned with a friend, and they said, "Well, I guess now you're going to have to practice what you preach." I hate it when people are actually listening.

If Jesus, the Perfect High Priest, restores the fallen with a spirit of humility, then certainly we, who are sinful and corrupt, must forgive our brothers and sisters with the same spirit of grace, humility, and awareness of our own imperfections.

Then, finally, it was time for Jesus to go. At His ascension, the Eleven met Him on a Galilean mountain where He commissioned them to continue to carry out His mission by saying, "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*"

As God, Jesus had all authority to now commission His disciples to carry out the building up of His new community of believers. They could accomplish their mission because as Emmanuel, He would be with them to do so. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ vindicated Him as the Son of God. It is the cornerstone of the Christian faith and the climax of God's great story of redemption. The redemptive work was finished, but now there was more work to do to spread the good news.

But it makes you stop and think: Are these really the ones we want to entrust this great story of redemption to? The disciples who never really understood His mission, who denied Him, who were shocked when He rose from the dead just as He said He would? These men were fearful, doubting, wounded skeptics...is this really the foundation you want for your church?

The answer, of course, is absolutely. They were just the ones to carry it out. Why? Because fearful, doubting, wounded people need a Savior. They know they need a Savior. And more than that, their fear, their doubt, and their wounds make them just like us. We see ourselves in these men to whom the Gospel was entrusted. And now, we are the ones to conquer our fear; we are the ones to believe despite doubt; we are the ones whose wounds have been healed by his stripes. We are the ones who have been entrusted with this priceless, matchless message: He lives!

[Prayer]

Lord Jesus, live anew in each man here. Help us to kill what is bitter, and unforgiving, and fearful, and doubting within us, that a Resurrected Savior is seen today in every room we enter, in every person we touch, in every word we say.

Today we claim the power that raised Jesus from the dead, as the power that has given us new life, and will raise us up on that last day to live with Him forever.