

Theme: Reasons for the Resurrection

Text: Luke 24:44-48 (EHV)

(Jesus appearing to His disciples on Easter evening) ⁴⁴ **He said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”** ⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.** ⁴⁶ **He said to them, “This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,** ⁴⁷ **and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.** ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.**

“Are we still doing Easter stuff, Pastor? Don’t you know that was two weeks ago already? This reading is literally from Easter Sunday. Why are we *still* talking about Easter? Why are we *still* singing Easter hymns?”

I’m glad you asked! (Ok, technically, you didn’t ask—I asked, because I’m the one who wrote this introduction), but maybe you were thinking and wondering the same thing: “Why are we still talking and singing about Easter?”

Well, one answer is because our congregation does what the Lutheran church has traditionally done in that it follows a “church calendar” throughout the year. The various seasons and festivals of the church year highlight the important things that Jesus did and taught. Easter, of course, is one of those very important church festivals and its season is traditionally celebrated by our congregation for six Sundays after Easter until we celebrate Jesus’ Ascension (which took place 40 days after Easter). So, the season of the church year we’re in right now is the Easter season.

Now, that answer might lead to another question: “Why spend six Sunday’s celebrating Easter? Is Easter *really* that important?” The answer, of course, is “Yes!” Easter really is that important because the resurrection of Jesus is really that important. In fact, *every* Sunday is meant to be a “little Easter” in that it celebrates and commemorates the day that Jesus rose from the dead. So, actually, the reading of a text from Easter Sunday or the singing of an Easter hymn wouldn’t be out of place on *any* Sunday!

Well, why was Jesus’ resurrection so important? *Why was that so essential?* Let’s let Jesus answer that question for Himself in His very own words from our text, **“This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day” (v. 46)**. He includes His resurrection along with His suffering and death in the category of things that **“must be.”** Why? Today, let’s continue our celebration of Easter by considering some of the **Reasons for the Resurrection**.

First of all, in regard to Jesus, His resurrection was *essential* because:

1. It proved His Words, and all of God’s Word, were true.

Jesus explained in the first verse of our text, **“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” (v. 44)**. His resurrection validated all His words about Himself; His claims to be the *Messiah*, the Son of God; God Himself. He had prophesied a number of times to His disciples and even to His enemies that He would suffer, be put to death, and rise again on the third day (**cf. Matthew 16:21; Mark 10:34; Luke 9:22**). We are told that **“He spoke this word openly” (Mark 8:32)** so that all would hear and believe His prophecy. He didn’t hide His message of salvation, or keep His teachings a secret as many false teachers would claim after Jesus ascension. No! Even His *enemies* knew Jesus’ prophecy and teaching! Remember what the Pharisees said to Pilate after Jesus’ death? **“Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ (Matthew 27:63)**. Jesus did, in fact, rise after three days, and His resurrection proved all His words to be true.

Jesus also explained to His disciples that the entire Old Testament Scriptures had prophesied this about Him as well. Look again at His Words in the first verse of our text, **“He said to them...Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses [the first five books of the Old Testament], the Prophets [the Old Testament books written by the prophets], and the Psalms.” (v. 44).** Therefore, Jesus resurrection validates all of *God’s Word* as well!

Secondly, in regard to Jesus, His resurrection was *essential* because:

2. It proved that Jesus is who He claimed to be, the Son of God.

Jesus’ resurrection not only proved all His words to be true, it also proved once and for all that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be: The Son of God; true God Himself. The Apostle Paul tells us in **Romans** that the resurrection was God’s ultimate proof that Jesus is His Son, **“Jesus Christ our Lord...[was] declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:3, 4 NKJV).**

Let’s not skip over one of the important verses from this text. In **v. 45** we’re told, **“Then he [Jesus] opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (v. 45).** This very same thing that Jesus did for His disciples He will do for us when we read from the Bible, **“the Scriptures.”** We pray that He would do just that: **“open [our] minds to understand the Scriptures”** and see how these **Reasons for the Resurrection** in regard to Jesus are also *essential* in regard to us! For you and me *personally*, the resurrection is also *essential*. Jesus’ resurrection assures us of some incredibly important things:

1. It assures us that our sins are forgiven!

The Apostle Paul tells us that without the resurrection, our faith in **Jesus** would be useless! He says, **“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” (1 Corinthians 15:17 NKJV).** Why does Paul say this? Because **Jesus’** blood shed on the cross was the *payment* for our sins, but the resurrection was the *proof* that God had accepted that payment and our sins are now **FORGIVEN!** If there were no resurrection there would be no living Savior; there would be no forgiveness. Some people have explained it this way: When you buy something, how do you prove that you’ve paid for it? You show your receipt. Jesus blood was the *payment* for sins. His resurrection was the *receipt*—God’s declaration and proof that all sins were “Paid in full!”

Jesus’ resurrection is also *essential* for us, because:

2. It assures us that we too will be resurrected on the Last Day!

Since **Jesus** rose from the dead, we are guaranteed that we too will rise. Jesus Himself assured us of this when He said in the Gospel of John, **“Because I live, you will live also,” (John 14:19)** and **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26).** I hope and pray that we all do! Jesus’ resurrection is the foundation of our faith and our sure and certain promise of heaven!

Jesus reminds us in our text of one more *essential* thing regarding the resurrection and it’s meaning for us. What does He list as some of the things **“that must be” (v. 46)?** Look again at **v. 47, “and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”** His words to His disciples are also words for us. We have once again been reminded of this incredible news of all that has been made ours through Jesus’ resurrection. What are we going to do with it? Jesus wants us to share this *essential* “Good News” with others. And so another **essential Reason for the Resurrection** is that:

3. It inspires us to share this “Good News” of salvation with others!

Jesus reminds His disciples—and us—in the last verse of our text, “**You are witnesses of these things**” (v. 48)!

✝ We are “**witnesses**” through the words of the Scriptures, the Bible—both the Old and New Testament.

✝ We are “**witnesses**” through faith in those inspired and sure Words of God.

✝ And, finally, we will one day be “**witnesses**” with our own eyes in heaven. As the Apostle John puts it, “**We shall see Him as He is**” (1 John 3:2 NKJV).

May we never tire of the message of Jesus’ resurrection. May we never forget its *essential* importance, or the **Reasons for the Resurrection**. Jesus died that we would live! He lives *again* that we would never die! Let’s live our lives for our *living* Savior, and let’s share this life-giving message with everyone! Amen!