

Resurrection Life of Jesus In Us

John 20:24-30

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

My wife and I came originally from London to America and we were in London for a year after leaving Ireland. I taught and pastored while my wife opened a dental office. One of our partners was an Englishman who had three little girls between four and maybe seven or eight years of age. Of course, those little girls produced their share of insights into life and funny little sayings that children of that age can produce.

One of them was called Caroline. She was out in the garden one afternoon and lifted a piece of wood that had nails in it. She was about four years of age and it wasn't long before one of the nails had pierced her thumb and the blood was streaming out. She looked at it with that kind of amused, detached feeling that little children can have, and walked slowly into the kitchen to her mommy. She said, "Mommy look, I am leaking!" Her mom of course wasn't as detached or academic about it all and charged for the band aids in the cabinet. To Caroline it was kind of strange that that red stuff was in her thumb and when you put a hole in the skin it came out. But her mom knew that there wouldn't be too much of that red stuff left if it kept coming. Caroline would soon no longer be there.

In a way, that is a normal experience for all of us. We know fine well, that if you let the blood keep coming, (really there's only about seven or eight pints of it) the heart will stop beating and the body will stop operating as normal. You'll be dead. That's why what happened on Friday, the event that you and I commemorated last Friday, was a normal event. Let's look at it as it is recorded in John 19:32-34.

John 19:32-34- "So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; (with Jesus) but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water".

That is normal. When you pierce a thumb with a nail or you pierce your side with a spear, the blood starts coming out and that's the beginning of the end. All of us know that. We know it in our own personal experience and we know that it's been the case for 6000 years, in the history of mankind. There are certain symptoms that get us worried because they're symptoms that physical life is ebbing out.

It may be the drop in the blood pressure- either the blood pressure is too high or it's too low. The body temperature may be too high or too low. The pulse rate may be too high or too low. But there are certain physical symptoms that send all the bells ringing inside our heads and we do everything possible to try to counteract those symptoms.

That's why the little girl's mom rushed for a band aid. That's why all of us rush immediately to counteract those physical symptoms. We know what comes next after those things happen. In fact, the truth is, that many of us live in fear of that final experience.

Shakespeare says, "Many of us put up with heavy situations here in life. We would end life, but the

thought of something after death, the undiscovered country from which no traveler returns, puzzles the will, and makes us rather suffer the things that we have in this life, than fly to other ills that we know not of."

That's why many of us pump iron like mad. That's why many of us beat ourselves running around tracks. That's why many of us down gallons of fruit juice. We are hoping somehow to put off those symptoms that mean the end of life. Probably all of us here have been educated to believe that when the heart finally stops beating, when the blood finally stops flowing, then consciousness ceases and existence ceases.

Loved ones, that's why the event that we commemorate today, is so abnormal. Let's look at John 20:24-29.

John 20:24-29- Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in the side, I will not believe".

Eight days later, His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see My hands; and put out your hand and place it in My side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe".

That's the contradiction. Look at John 19:34 that we read.

John 19:34- "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water." Then look at John 20:27. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side." Now that's what's different. The wound was open and the lifeblood drained out during the period of a prolonged crucifixion. Then there was a night and a day in a tomb. Then, on the third day, the wound was still open so that Thomas was able to put his hand into the wound. Yet, Jesus was alive.

Now see, that's a different life force. That's a life force that is able to exist in the midst of physical symptoms that you and I have been taught signify death. This life force is able to exist right in the middle of those symptoms and yet life continues. You and I have believed that when the side is open, when the wound is open and the blood flows out that's the end. Here's a man with the wound open and the blood flowed out and yet He is still alive. So this is an unbelievable power that seems to co-exist with physical symptoms of weakness and yet in itself seems to be made complete or perfect. Its strength seems to be made complete or perfect in the midst of that weakness.

Do you see that it wasn't a ghostly life? Thomas, the agnostic actually put his hand into Jesus side, but look what happened the next day in John 21:9-12.

John 21:9-12 - "When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish lying on it and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask Him "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

So it wasn't a ghostly body. It was a body that could actually eat fish that had been roasted or broiled on a fire. It was a real physical body. Now loved ones, it's because the facts of this resurrection life power are so utterly different from what you and I know that this event of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection have been examined and re-examined down through the centuries.

The unbelievable thing is that even though the Roman government had a vested interest in proving that this man had not risen from the dead, and even though the Jewish religious leaders were determined by lies to prove that He had not risen from the dead, the twin facts of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are more fully reported and historically established than almost any other facts of the history of mankind.

It is incredible that this fact of Jesus' resurrection, subjected to more legal, literal, and psychological examination than any other fact, remains absolutely sure and certain. So that even we, the most technically and scientifically advanced society in our world, are observing this Easter more realistically than we have ever done before.

It's not looking at it as the renewal of the rights of Spring or some wishful hope that death was not real. The advance of scholarship over these past 10 to 20 years, have made us more certain of this event than ever before. With all the archaeological examination and research, we're surer of the manuscript evidence than ever.

Therefore we know that legend, lies, grave robbers or hallucinating disciples do not explain the fact that He lived despite being pronounced 'dead' by the experts of that time. Despite all the strain that this man went through- all the things that we know cause death- He lived. And He lived not by getting a new body. That's the incredible thing. He came back with the same body- with all the symptoms in it that would indicate death.

Now, loved ones that's a new force and power in our universe. It's not like the physical life that you and I have coursing through our bodies at this minute. It's a different power. I think some of us feel if that's a power that exists in our universe, but why only that once, why did it not express itself again and again? It did. It did. While Jesus was here in a physical body, He expressed and manifested that power.

There was a friend of His called Lazarus, brother of Mary and Martha. They were friends together of Jesus and Lazarus died. The sisters called for Jesus after Lazarus had already been buried. Jesus came to the tomb and manifested that life force so that Lazarus got up and came back to life. He rejoined his sisters in their home.

Another time a woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years and had no money left to pay for more doctors, came to Jesus. The life force again went forth from Him and her blood resumed the normal operation. On another occasion, a woman had been bent over for 18 years. Again, Jesus manifested this life force so that her body was straightened.

Repeatedly Jesus would manifest this life force that dealt with ordinary physical things like bread and fish and changed them. So that even though the bread and the fish looked the same, they did more, they somehow did more. That's the incredible thing about it. It looks on the outside just the same, but it somehow does more. Somehow there's strength where you say there should not be strength, there's life where there doesn't seem to be blood, there's courage where there doesn't seem to be

any heart left.

You see, this life destroyed death so that Jesus Himself has always been alive. He was alive long before he came to Nazareth and He's been alive ever since He ascended off the earth and left Palestine. So His was the life force that manifested itself to the Old Testament people. I don't know if you realize that. I think a lot of us say, "Oh, no one has seen God at any time." But why does the bible say well this person has seen God?" Well, it's obvious. No one has seen God at any time- but, the Son has revealed Him and of course it was Jesus that did that miracle back in Genesis 18:1-3.

Genesis 18:1-3: "And the Lord appeared to him (to Abraham) by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, "My Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant." Then look down in verse 9 and 10 "They said to him, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" and he said, "She is in the tent." The Lord said, (and the Lord was one of those three men) The Lord said, "I will surely return to you in the spring and Sarah, your wife, shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him."

Loved ones, it was Jesus' resurrection life that enabled a 90-year-old lady to have a baby. It was Jesus' resurrection life that came to the Red sea and divided it so that the Israelites could pass through. It was Jesus' resurrection life that made one little cruise of oil last and last and last, day in and day out. It was Jesus' resurrection life that healed people in Old Testament times. It was Jesus who walked beside Daniel in the fiery furnace and was the fourth person that prevented the flames burning up Daniel's body even though the flames touched his body.

Loved ones that power has always been in our world, and really we shouldn't be surprised at all of this. Repeatedly, the doctors will say one week in a coma and you'll be a vegetable- two weeks in a coma, and you'll never recover your mental powers. Not only the policemen that we know of here in Minneapolis, but I remember a young lady named Taylor that was a medic. At the same time as my Dad was dying, she was in a coma. I went to the hospital and prayed. She was in the coma for two weeks. Everybody was convinced that she would be a vegetable for the rest of her life. She practices dentistry in Ireland today.

All of us have come across amazing times when physical symptoms indicate that the person should die. Don't you see that this dear Jesus of ours is constantly trying to point out to us, "Look there is my resurrection life that is available to you and can make fun of the limitations of your physical life."

Now, Lake Superior never gives us its dead but you may remember the little girl that was in the freezing waters of Lake Superior for a day and a night and is alive today. Now, we think it's unscientific to attribute that to chance. We don't think that you can build a world of order and then have certain events that keep happening that you attribute to chance. We say that it is due to the resurrection life force of Jesus that still operates where people need it to operate and where they are prepared to believe that it operates.

It is one of the things that help all of us with this- to explain why dead trees outside, suddenly begin to burst into leaf. No one can explain it. The medics can explain how and what happens to the heartbeat after it starts but nobody can explain why the first heartbeat of the first little baby

begins. You look at the ground, and you think it's dead. There's nothing there and you look at a dried up little bulb and say there's no possibility of life coming from that. Then a few weeks later there's a yellow flower or a purple flower that is grown from that apparent deadness.

Loved ones it's because the only reason we continue to exist is that this resurrection life force is raising a sun everyday. It's coming into the midst of hopelessness and coming into the midst of deadness and creating life against all the odds. It is life's power. We can't do without it. You know certain attitudes of certain people and your work that will not change them. You know when you're home there are certain things there that you can't change. You've given them books to read, you prayed for them, you've tried to influence them and nothing changes. You and I know there are financial things and professional career things that we cannot break with all our efforts.

Loved ones, Jesus' resurrection life specializes in that kind of situation. Not only have we the evidence of it here in this historical event of his resurrection. Look anywhere in this world and you can't fail to see evidences of this incredible power changing the unchangeable and inserting enough of these little miracles into our observations that we are convinced. We cannot see everything and we cannot understand everything. But if you want to experience it in your own life it's easy. It's just one plain principle: "be it unto you according to your faith," that's it.

You've some situations at home, you may have some situations in your own body, you may have some situations at work that by all the laws of observing physical and mental life, are bound to fail and are headed for defeat. It's up to you. Are you going to believe that that is all that is operating? If you do, it will be unto you according to your faith. Or are you going to believe that this dear Savior who destroyed death and sickness and all that leads to it is also able today, because He is still alive, to change that situation? It's up to you. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we know You rose from the dead. The intellectual and historical evidence is too strong for us to deny it. We know Lord that there have been things that have happened in our own lives and then other's lives that indicate there is a life force of some kind in this world that seems to transcend and supersede the limitations of our physical lives.

Lord we do apologize that we have too long regarded these as exceptions, just as we have regarded Easter Sunday as an exception. Lord we determine this day to change that and to begin to count on this resurrection life. We begin to count on it in the situations in which we find ourselves and we will begin to have faith that Your life is also able to give life to our mortal bodies and to these mortal situations and circumstances in which we find ourselves imprisoned.

So Lord, we choose on the basis of the evidence this day to believe You. Begin to move in us and move in our friends and our relatives. Move in these circumstances and change them. Lord we choose to believe, we choose to put You to the test as You have asked us to that it may be unto us according to our faith, for Your glory and satisfaction here in our lives. Amen.