

Sermonette #1. The Scriptures Say: He Will Rise

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 16: 8- 11

⁸ I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ⁹Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, ¹⁰because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ¹¹You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

There are many times that people make predictions about what is going to happen. When people predict what will happen in the new year, or in politics, or in sports, chances are we don't usually put a whole lot of time, effort or energy in seeing who is right and who is wrong because they are not that important for our life. However, there are times when we have heard a prediction that we have actually listened too and then we wait to see if it will come true. We might remember a few of them.

There was the Mayan Calendar that ended in 2012. It was said that the world would end on or around December 12 of that year. Surprise it didn't.

Maybe you remember Y2K? On the Stroke of New Year's of the year 2000 all the networks of computers were going to crash because they wouldn't know what to do with the change-over from 1999 to 2000. The stroke of midnight came and...nothing happened.

There are many other predictions that have gone wrong. There were predictions by famous people that things like the TV, Computer and cell phone would never last because they were so impersonal. There was even a prediction that Ronald Reagan did not look presidential enough to win the election and he won two of them.

There are many predictions that we are skeptical of because they can be wrong. We dismiss many predictions for this reason.

Yet, there is one time that we should not be skeptical of a prediction; when it is called a prophecy. A Prediction can be wrong because it is made by man, but a prophecy that God writes in his Word will never be wrong because it is something that God tells us will happen.

On Good Friday, we heard that there were at least 25 Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled during the last 24 hours of Jesus life of the earth. Each of these prophecies were things that God was pointing out MUST HAPPEN. When they did happen the people would know that this man was more than a teacher or a Rabbi. This man was the fulfillment of all of Scriptures. He was the Messiah, the Savior of all.

Yet, while many prophecies were fulfilled that pointed out that Jesus was paying the price for our sins, there was another prophecy that must yet be fulfilled. We hear that prophecy in the words of King David from Psalm 16. ⁸ **I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.** ⁹**Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,** ¹⁰**because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.** ¹¹**You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.**

This is the prophecy was special because it talks about a resurrection. Anyone might prophecy suffering and death, but a resurrection, prophesying that someone coming back from the dead is something that is very special.

Jesus, himself, had also prophesied about his resurrection. During the last weeks and months of his life he had told his disciples that it must happen that he would be arrested, suffer, die and rise again. He had told the chief priests and Pharisees that the sign of his status as the Savior would be resurrection.

Yet, many were skeptical when he said these things. The disciples didn't understand till later what Jesus was talking about and the religious leaders mocked him for what he said.

And yet, just like we do today, they waited to see what would happen with this prophecy. Would the grave be filled or empty. They waited to see if this prophecy would be fulfilled.

Sermonette #2. He is Risen! I Have Seen the Lord!

Scripture Lesson: John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes, ¹¹ but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

The religious leaders waited in an anticipation wondering what would happen. They had made the tomb secure with a special seal and guard posted outside. Nobody was getting out, but more importantly to them, nobody was getting in.

The women and Jesus' disciples waited in sadness. They had lost their loved one and master. Things had been so rushed that they had not had time to perform the burial rites and ceremony that were customary for the death of a loved one.

Early in the morning the women hurry to the tomb to perform this last act of love. What did they expect to find? They expected to find the tomb with the stone in front of it. Yet, when they got there, the stone was rolled away. Mary Magdalene returns at once to tell Peter and John what she has seen.

Peter and John come to investigate. They find it just like Mary has said. The tomb is open. When they go in, they find something else that is strange, the body is not there, but the burial clothes are, folded neatly where the body should be.

At the same time, the soldiers have gone to the chief priests and have reported the same thing. The body is gone. When the earthquake rolled the stone away, the tomb was empty.

Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb. In the middle of her grief, Mary has stayed at the tomb. She does not yet know that Jesus is risen. Her answer to the angels and the gardener shows her grief, " they have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him.

The tomb was empty that was clear, but why was not. Mary thinks that someone has moved him; maybe Joseph, maybe the religious leaders, maybe someone else. Yet. the truth was standing right in front of her and she did not recognize it yet.

The truth has been prophesied by David and repeated by Jesus many times. This truth was that his body had not been stolen from the grave. His body was not in the grave because he was not dead anymore. He had risen from the dead.

The truth spoke to her with one word of love and it becomes clear, "Mary."

It is then that Mary sees the truth of the resurrection, Jesus is not in the tomb because he is alive. She goes and tells the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

Sermonette #3: The Scriptures are Fulfilled: He is Risen and We Will Rise Too!

Scripture Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15: 12-21.

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

The basis of our faith is this Savior, who went to the cross who dies and rose again. We sum that belief up in the Creeds. In each of the Creeds we confess that we believe that Jesus is our one and only Savior, who lived and died and then rose again. The resurrection is something very important that we confess.

Anyone can live and die. There are many religious teachers in the history of the world who suffered for what they taught and died: Buddha, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, these men suffered for what they taught and died.

However, the true test of whether someone is truly from God, that their message is really one that we should listen to, is if that do that one last thing that God said must be done: rise from the dead.

God said the Messiah would rise from the dead, Jesus said that too..... and he did. The women testified to Jesus resurrection, the disciples did, the angels did, even a group of unbelieving soldiers said that Jesus rose.

Buddha did not rise, Mohammed did not rise, Joseph Smith did not rise.....only Jesus can and did rise and showed himself as the risen Lord.

Our faith rests on these facts promised by God and witnessed to by the disciples, the women, the angels and even the guards. The tomb was empty not because he was stolen, but because he had risen.

This resurrection is so important for us because it is the sign and seal that all that God said that Jesus had to do he did. Jesus' resurrection means that all that he said he would do, all that he set out to win for us he has done. When Jesus said, "It is finished." All of our sins were taken away, now and forever, there is not one that is left. He has defeated sin, death and the devil. He has paid the price that God demanded for sin. He has defeated sin, death and the devil.

Yet, we still doubt. Even though we have heard the testimony of the women, the disciples, the angels and even some guards, we will still go away today wondering if this is really true. We might leave today with the news of a resurrected Savior who did this for me and we may take it for granted and not be in the Lord's house for another few weeks, or months or a year. We will get caught up in the nice teachings that some of other teachers teach that are contrary to God's Word. We will be tempted to think that sin is not really sin and that there is no need for repentance and forgiveness. We want begin to think that there are many roads to heaven and that every path leads there. We will begin to lose the importance that the death and resurrection of Jesus has for our life.

There is one other thing that Jesus' resurrection shows us. Because Jesus is risen, we will rise too. Heaven is not something you will take hold of until your last breath is taken, however it is something that you have already through faith in Jesus. The apostle Paul points out the important of faithfully holding on to this teaching, this Savior, because it shows us the truth that we will rise too. Paul says these words in 1 Cor 15.

Without the resurrection there is no hope. Without the resurrection we have no sign and seal that God accepted the price that Jesus paid. But he has risen. Jesus is who he says he is, he has done what he has said he would do to save us and because he is risen, we will rise too.