

2011 SERMON #3 I BELIEVE—JESUS RISEN, ASCENDED, AND JUDGING

Acts 1:1-11

Today we look at a continued part of the Apostles creed
**I believe in Jesus Christ who rose from the dead,
 Ascended into heaven, and
 Sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
 From thence he shall to judge the quick and the dead.**

We have a lot to cover today,
 And we cover something that is an woe for all mankind
 I think it was Benjamin Franklin that said:
 There are two thing of certainty in this life- death and taxes.

But For the Christian we believe there are three
 Things of certainty in this life-
 Death, resurrection and judgment.

Now there are a lot of people who don't believe it.
 The world is full of skeptics.

It reminded me of a Little boy: "Oh, Gramma, I sure am happy to see you! Now maybe Daddy will do the trick he has been promising us. Grandmother asked: "What trick is that?" Little boy: "He told Mommy that he would climb the walls if you came to visit again!"

Let me tell you that the resurrection was no trick.
 It is a historical fact.
 The central doctrine of the Christian church.
 We won't find even the pinky bone of Jesus
 We will only find an empty tomb.

I believe in Jesus Christ God's only Son who
I. ROSE FROM THE DEAD

The Angel said to Mary

Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." Matthew 28:7

Billy Graham said: If I were an enemy of Christianity, I would aim right at the Resurrection, because that is the heart of Christianity."

The Apostles Creed says:
 He rose from the dead.
 No if's and but's about it.
 It's not open to debate

He was buried on Friday
 Rose on Sunday

What makes Jesus resurrection unique?

IT WAS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND.

He is the first fruits

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. I Corinthians 15:20

Now I know some of you are thinking.

What about Lazarus???

Jesus brought him back from the dead.

What about the widows son, or Jarius Daughter, or the Shunnamites son,

They came back from the dead.

The difference is that they rose to mortality

But Jesus rose to immortality.

Never to die again.

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. I Corinthians 15:20-23

Jesus was the first to rise from the dead.

Never to die again.

Pitchard said the resurrection was

Personal—it was Jesus himself not some substitute

Bodily—it was his crucified body that was raised with scars and wounds

Physically- it wasn't a ghost or a figment of someone's imagination.

it really happened.

When you read the epistles

The climax of Jesus is not that he was crucified,

But that Jesus rose from the dead.

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. I Corinthians 15:17-19

Without the resurrection

1. Our faith is worthless. Vs 17 Its futile
2. We are all still in our sins. Vs 17 Unforgiven
3. We will never see our loved ones again. Vs. 18 dead is dead
4. We should be pitied. Vs 19 it would all be a lie

Now there are people claim the resurrection isn't necessary for our belief:

We hear them say,

“Even if the resurrection isn't true, Christianity is still the best way to live.”

Do you know what the proper doctrinal term for that is?

Baloney!

I don't know about you,

But I do not have any desire to follow some clever fable all my life?

If Jesus didn't not rise from the dead,

The Hallelujah Chorus is just another piece of music.

The cross is just another form of execution

Easter is joke

And the Easter bunny is real.

Ever watch the gambling channel?
 When it gets down to the final cards
 One of the players will look at their cards,
 Shove all his chips to the middle
 And stand up and say: I'm all in.
 That means win or lose- it's over for him.

When I was 19 years old I took a gamble.
 I pushed all my belief and doubts into the middle of the table
 And I stood up and said: I am all in.
 Jesus is lord.
 He died.
 He was crucified
 He rose from the grave
 He ascended into heaven
 That is what I believe.
 I'm all in.
 And from that point on
 I have based my entire life, ministry and future on it.
 I invite you to do the same.

Christ rose from the dead

II. HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

And when he had said these things as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. Acts 1:9

On a trip to Israel I stood outside Bethlehem
 on the very ground where they believe Jesus ascended into heaven.
 I looked up into the very sky where the two angels spoke.

Men of Galilee, they said: Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven. Acts 1:11

Ascension is probably the most neglected doctrine of Christian faith.
 We believe Jesus died was crucified, and rose from the dead.
 But we don't talk a lot about the ascension.
 Maybe it's because,
 Matthew doesn't mention it at all and John only briefly.
 It is only Mark, Luke and Acts who speak of it.
 Is the ascension just a P.S. to the letter?

Did the early fathers put that in to have a
 convenient way for Jesus to get back to heaven?

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. I Timothy 3:16

No, it's more than that.

The ascension in the early Church stood
 on an equal basis with Good Friday and Easter.
 Because it is a doctrine of hope.
 That just as Jesus has gone into heaven.

He will come again from heaven.
And we know right where he is:

Just like the little boy who said he knew where his grandmother lived. He thought she lived at the airport, because that was where they always picked her up and dropped her off.

We know right where Jesus is.
And we know that his leaving brought in a new era.
It initiated the coming of the Holy Spirit.
Jesus said:

But I tell you the truth; it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. Matthew 16:7

Physically Jesus was bound by space and time.
The Holy Spirit is unlimited, and with us all the time.

Pritchard says: The ascension answers four questions about Jesus.

1. What happened to Jesus
2. Where did he go
3. What is he doing now
4. How will he return.

I believe in Jesus Christ
rose from the grave
Ascended into heaven

III. AND SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY.

Jesus is now at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
The right hand was a place of authority.
He is exalted, glorified, and enthroned.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Romans 8:34

The crown of thorns has been replaced by the crown of glory.
And shepherds staff has been replaced with the judge's gavel.
Our place in hell is replaced with a home in the New Jerusalem.

Jesus now intercedes for the saints, for you and me.
At the right hand of God
He is our high priest

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession....Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

Since he has been to earth he understands our sufferings.
And since he is now back beside the father
He intercedes for us.
He takes my pitiful prayers
And transforms them into powerful petitions before the throne of God.
He is our advocate,

A little girl had fallen and had a cut near her eye. The doctor saw the cut was not serious but that stitches were needed. However he didn't want to give the child an anesthetic because of the location, and said to her that the procedure would be painful and asked if she could stand it. The little girl replied that she could, if her father would hold her hand. The father then took her in his lap, slipped his arm around her, and held her tight. The doctor did his work, and the little girl never flinched.

The father could not possibly have erased the pain from this process.

But, if he had not been there, the girl's reaction would have been much different. Their would have been weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Arthur G. Ferry, Jr., Eating Cold Grits

That's what Jesus does when death comes,
 Instead of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth,
 He intercedes for us and takes us into his arms
 And he stands with us before the father.
 And that make all the difference in the world.

JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

SITTETH AT THE RIGH HAND OF GOD THE FATHER

IV. AND HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

Christ is coming again.

Bringing the best of times and the worst of times.

The best of times for the believer

The worst of times for the unbeliever

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. II Corinthians 5:10

Just a few year ago.

4/5 people believe we would stand before a judgment of God.

Today we think were under the gun to have to give an account to our parents of where we've been,

Or to our spouse of what we're doing,

Or to our employer for wasted work hours.

It is nothing compared to giving an account to God.

All texts of the bible that speak of the quick and the dead, are related to judgment,

And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. Acts 10:42 KJV

The earliest meaning of 'quick' had nothing to do with speed,

Quick meant 'endowed with life',

It was the expression of a baby first move in their mother's womb.

She feels the quickening.

In the Apostles Creed quick and dead means all,

Friends

Jesus is coming to judge the living and the dead.

One of every 13 verses in the New Testament

Deals with some aspect of our Lord's return to the earth.

But we don't know the date or the time.
 Even the billboard on Roosevelt might be wrong.
 Because Jesus says we don't know the time only the season.

When Jesus comes it will be over.
 There will be no more time to repent.
 There will be no more time to turn from your sin.
 It will be judgment day.

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised?... 5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. II Peter 3:3-7

And Friends if you don't know Jesus as your savior,
 You will know him as your judge.
 For more than 2000 years God in his mercy
 has held back judgment,

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. II Peter 3:9

If this is the terminal generation
 The smartest thing we can do is to give our life 100 % to Jesus
 Trust him completely,
 So that if he comes today or tomorrow,
 We will have no regrets
 But will be ready to see him when he comes.

For the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. II Peter 3:9-10

I am reminded of the pioneers were making their way across the prairie. As they traveled in covered wagons they were horrified one day, to note a prairie fire, and a long line of smoke in the west, stretching for miles coming at them fiercely and rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before but it would be impossible to go back before the flames would be upon them. One man only seemed to have understanding what could be done. He gave the command to set fire to the grass behind them. Then when a space was burned over, the whole company moved back upon it. As the flames roared on toward them from the west, a little girl cried out in terror, "Are you sure we shall not all be burned up?" **The leader replied, "My child, the flames cannot reach us here, for we are standing where the fire has been!"**

Friend when you trust in Christ today.
 You are standing where the fire of God's wrath as already been.
 Who took our suffering, shame, guilt, and sin.
 And God put upon him the fire of judgment for our sins.
 We are safe in the arms of Jesus

"On Him Almighty vengeance fell,
Which would have sunk a world to hell.
He bore it for a chosen race,
And thus becomes our Hiding Place."

So today, if you don't know if your heart is right with God.

I invite you to say this prayer with me.

Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

Forgive me of my sins.

I believe you died in my place.

Let me see the glory of your coming,

And not your condemnation.

I pray this in Jesus name.