

The Day of Resurrection - Promises Completed, Mission Entrusted

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

8:58 PM

Introduction

a. Sermon Introduction

- i. This morning I we are going to look at John's account of the resurrection and I want to start by introducing the concept of textual criticism
 - 1) Textual criticism is the examination of similar texts to see what the authors chose and did not choose to include in the text
 - 2) What the author intends to communicate can often be found in what they did or did not include in their account
 - 3) Textual criticism is especially useful in the gospels, where several authors tell the same story
 - 4) So, textual criticism is the discipline that tries to understand what the author is trying to communicate
 - a) This can be used well or poorly
 - b) Some will use this to pit gospel authors against each other, trying to find that they were communicating different things
 - i) Example - Matthew is the only one who mentions that Peter walked on water, Matthew, Mark and John all agree that Jesus walked on the water
 - ii) Bad conclusion - Peter walking on the water must not be true
 - iii) Bad question - Why does Matthew fabricate this story?
 - c) But, it can be used well, understanding that all of the gospel writers agree with each other and tell the same story, but they may want us to understand different aspects of the story
 - i) Example - Matthew is the only one who mentions that Peter walked on water, Matthew, Mark and John all agree that Jesus walked on the water
 - ii) Good conclusion - Peter walking on the water must be true, but Matthew is the only one who includes it because he wants us to understand something different about the story
 - iii) Good question - What new understanding do we get from these added details? What is Matthew trying to communicate by adding these details?
 - d) You must start with the right assumptions to use textual criticism rightly
 - i) Especially inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility
- ii. So, as we come to the resurrection, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and Peter all have something they want us to understand about the resurrection
 - 1) Understanding inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility, we must say that all are true and all are necessary
 - a) It is like a painting hanging in a museum that guides talk about when giving tours
 - b) One guide may come up to the painting and describe the intricate brushstrokes and talk about how the painter was a master at handling the paintbrush
 - c) Another guide may come and marvel at the breadth and use of color in the painting and talk about why the author used color how he did
 - d) They are both describing the same facts and they both agree with each other
 - e) But, they want us to understand different things about the same facts
 - 2) It would be great to contemplate what Paul wants us to understand about the resurrection
 - 3) It would be great to contemplate what Matthew wants us to understand about the resurrection
 - 4) But, this morning, I want to focus on what John wants us to understand about the resurrection

- iii. This is similar to what I introduced two weeks ago with literary analysis with the Crucifixion, and exactly the same as what I did with the denial and restoration of Peter four weeks ago.
 - 1) Again, I was using techniques to understand what John wants us to understand about the text
 - 2) This is how I submit myself to the Word
 - a) I could get to the resurrection and teach the things that I like about the resurrection, or the things I understand well about the resurrection
 - b) But, I submit myself to the Word and try to understand what John wants us to understand about the resurrection
 - c) And, it has been useful, I have learned and understood new aspects of the resurrection in my study this week, and I hope I can share some of these with you this morning

b. Passage Introduction

- i. When I study John's account of the first day of the resurrection, I see one clear theme coming through
- ii. John's theme is that the promises of Christ are fulfilled in and by the resurrection
- iii. It is really John's outworking of Paul's statement in II Corinthians 1:20
 - 1) For all the promises of God find their Yes in him (Christ). That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

c. Read John 20:1-23

d. Proposition and Outline

- i. **Proposition:** John presents the resurrection as the completion, fulfillment and initial down payment of the promises of Christ, especially the promises of John 13-17, so we must find our hope, motivation and power in the completed promises of the resurrection of Christ.
- ii. **Outline**
 - 1) Two Curious Athletes - The Promise of Believing
 - 2) A Mistaken Encounter - The Promise of Coming and Going
 - 3) A Straightforward Command - The Promise of Sending
 - 4) An Empowering Breath - The Promise of Empowering
 - 5) A Complicated Blessing - The Promise of Washing
 - 6) Applications

I. Two Curious Athletes - The Promise of Believing

a. Reference - John 20:1-10

b. This is also briefly dealt with in Luke 24:12

- i. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

c. Notice what John adds to our understanding of the story

- i. It was not just Peter, it was Peter and John (verse 3)
 - 1) By the way, John outran Peter (verse 4)
 - 2) But Peter ran into the tomb first (verse 5)
- ii. When they left, they did not know Christ had risen (verse 2)
- iii. They both went into the tomb to see the clothes closely (verses 6-8)
- iv. John believed, even though, to that point, he had not understood (verses 8-9)
- v. The added details all point to the last detail - the Resurrection caused John to believe
 - 1) This is what John wants us to see
 - 2) This is a common theme of John's gospel, and explicitly the point
 - a) John 20:31 (look at next week) - but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

d. This is the completion and fulfillment of a promise given by Christ in John 13-17

- i. Each completion and fulfillment promise can be found in several places in John 13-17, but we'll focus on just one occurrence of the promise in most cases
- ii. John 14:28-29 - You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.
- iii. The crucifixion and resurrection have 'taken place' now, and now, John does believe - Christ fulfilled His promise in His resurrection

II. A Mistaken Encounter - The Promise of Coming and Going

a. Reference - John 20:11-18

b. By the best harmonizations of the gospel accounts of the resurrection (in my estimation), this meeting is not detailed elsewhere in the synoptics - it is an account unique to John

c. What is the focus of this account

i. Some interesting details

- 1) Mary still does not understand the resurrection (verse 11)
- 2) Mary does not understand the significance of the angels (verses 12-13)
- 3) Mary does not recognize Christ at first (verses 14-15)

ii. The focus, though, seems to be the interesting statement at the end (verse 17)

- 1) This is a somewhat unexpected statement - it seems that he could have answered some of Mary's questions
 - a) But merely His calling of her name is enough for her to see and believe -
 - i) Another example of the first point - the promise of believing fulfilled in the resurrection
 - ii) The resurrected Christ speaks belief into Mary
- 2) The only thing He tells Mary, at least that is recorded by John, is that He has not yet ascended to the Father
 - a) He tells Mary not to cling to Him - probably because, Mary understanding Christ has risen, does not want to 'lose track' of Him again
 - b) But, Christ is and must continue to return to the Father, Mary cannot cling to Him

d. This is the completion and fulfillment of a promise given by Christ in John 13-17

- i. John 14:28 - You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.
- ii. John 16:28 - I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.
- iii. Christ has started His goings, and now, He is going to the Father - Christ fulfilled His promise in His resurrection

III. A Straightforward Command - The Promise of Sending

a. Reference - John 20:19-23

b. This appearance of Christ is also dealt with in Luke 24:36-49

- i. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

c. Notice what John adds to the account and focuses on

- i. He does not focus on the bodily resurrection of Christ - he leaves that to Luke right now
 - 1) He mentions this briefly (verse 20)
 - 2) We'll see John emphasize this in other places in John 21
- ii. He focuses on a command (verse 21)
- iii. He focuses on what promise Christ is bestowing on them (verse 22)
- iv. He focuses on what the command entails (verse 23)
- v. These three foci will be the next three points
 - 1) Here will focus on the first, the command Christ gives
 - 2) As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.
 - 3) This idea is present in Luke 24:28 - You are witnesses of these things.
 - 4) But John turns it from the passive declarative sense into the active imperative sense
 - a) It is not merely a fact, it is a command

d. This is the completion and fulfillment of a promise given in John 13-17

- i. John 17:17 - As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.
- ii. Christ promised a commissioning, and now, the Risen Christ commissions them to the task
 - 1) We looked at this task several weeks ago when we considered 'The World' in John 13-17 and saw how we are sent as witnesses into the world, so I won't go into depth
 - 2) We will look at this command in more depth during the 'Complicated Blessing' as well

IV. An Empowering Breath - The Promise of Empowering

- a. **Reference - John 20:21-23**
- b. **This idea is present in Luke 24:29 - And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you.**
- c. **But John clarifies exactly what this promise is**
 - i. The promise is to provide the Holy Spirit
 - ii. The Holy Spirit is the one who will empower the work, who will 'clothe you with power from on high' - Luke
- d. **This is the completion and fulfillment of a promise given in John 13-17**
 - i. John 16:7 - Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.
 - ii. Christ promised the sending of the Spirit, and now, The Risen Christ breathes His Spirit upon them
 - 1) We see this promise come to full fruition in Acts 2 - when the Spirit descends with power on the disciples
 - 2) But, John emphasizes that it is the risen Christ who sends the Spirit - the promise is fulfilled in Christ resurrection, even if the fullness of the promise has not yet occurred

V. A Complicated Blessing - The Promise of Washing

- a. **Reference - John 20:23**
- b. **This idea is not present in Luke 24, John adds a detail about the commissioning**
- c. **The commissioning, the sending, will be to administer the ministry of forgiveness**
 - i. We must ask what this means
 - 1) Does it mean the apostles (and perhaps their successors) have the power by declaration to cause or prevent forgiveness of sins
 - a) This is the Roman Catholic view, the apostles, and by succession the popes, and by commissioning the bishops, have the ability to effectively declare forgiveness of sins or to effectively declare lack of forgiveness
 - b) Thus, in the confessional, the priest proclaims the forgiveness of God to the penitent - the declaration is considered effective, forgiveness is caused by the declaration
 - c) We must reject this view
 - i) One reference - Luke 5:20-21 - And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"
 - ii) The Pharisees sinfully misapplied their statement, but their statement was right
 - iii) Only God alone can effectively proclaim forgiveness of sins
 - 2) So, what does it mean?
 - a) We must see this blessing in relationship to other similar blessings Christ gave
 - i) Matthew 16:17-19 (right after Peter proclaims Jesus as the Christ) - And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

- ii) Matthew 18:15-20 - "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."
- b) This blessing is wrapped up in the church
 - i) The church is built on Peter and his proclamation of Christ and entrusted with the keys (Matt 16)
 - ii) The keys are used specifically in church membership and discipline to proclaim salvation or lack thereof
 - iii) Church membership is not about effectually forgiving sins, but about recognizing and affirming the forgiveness of sins
 - One. Assurance of salvation comes, at least partially, from the affirmation by the church that you are exhibiting the marks of salvation
 - iv) Church discipline is not about effectually denying forgiveness of sins, but it is about removing the recognition and affirmation of forgiveness and providing a stern warning of judgment
 - One. The church removes their affirmation of salvation to remove assurance and hopefully turn the offender to repentance
- 3) The command to be sent into the world culminates with proper working of the church!
 - a) The church, working and governed properly, testifies to Christ and carefully affirms or denies affirmation of salvation and forgiveness
 - b) This is what disciples are sent to do - be the church

d. This is the completion and fulfillment of a promise given in John 13-17

- i. John 13:3-15 - Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean." When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.
- ii. Christ promised that He would wash the disciples, that is forgive their sins, and the Risen Christ proclaims the forgiveness of sins
- iii. Moreover, Christ promised that the disciples would be given the ministry of washing, and the Risen Christ proclaims the ministry of forgiving sins
 - 1) We often read this command in terms of humble service, which it assuredly is
 - 2) But, can we not also see the entrusting of the ministry of forgiveness here that is fulfilled in John 20 at the resurrection
 - 3) We are to wash one another from sin, not effectually like Christ does, but in affirmation of salvation and encouraging and edifying one another in the church

VI. Applications

- a. We are going to look at the actions of the people in John's account to see what the applications of these truths are
- b. There are five actions (some commanded or passive actions) that we see here
- c. We will meditate on:
 - i. How these actions are spurred by the crucifixion
 - ii. How these actions should be imitated by us
 - iii. How the promises completed empower them

1. Peter and John run to the tomb

- i. When Peter and John here the first inkling of the resurrection, they run to find out for themselves (verses 3-4)
 - 1) Peter and John are filled with wonder and hope at the announcement and want to find out more
 - 2) Once they see a glimpse of glory from the outside, they run in to see more clearly (verses 4-6)
- ii. So, we ought to find motivation to study and understand Christ in the resurrection of Christ
 - 1) Just like John and Peter, knowing what we do about the resurrection, we ought to desire to know more about Christ
 - 2) Upon learning a little bit more, we ought to delve deeper - study and understanding of Christ should lead to more study and understanding
 - a) By study and understanding I do not necessarily mean academic book study, although this is assuredly a good thing, but rather, simply meditation on the things of Christ and delving into the Word to learn of Christ
 - b) Knowing of the resurrection, we ought to want to know more of Christ and His resurrection
 - 3) We ought to run to do this, showing fervor to the task
- iii. This is, interestingly, tied to the fulfilled promise of the going of Christ
 - 1) Consider Colossians 3:1-2 - If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
 - 2) Christ has gone to the Father, he is above, seated at the right hand of God
 - 3) This motivates us to set our minds on things above, to search out the things of Christ

2. John sees the grave clothes and believes

- i. When John understands the resurrection, he believes (verse 8)
 - 1) He sees the grave clothes still there
 - 2) He sees the cloth from Christ's head neatly folded
 - 3) He understands and believes
- ii. So, we ought to find motivation to believe in the resurrection of Christ
 - 1) As we understand the resurrection, we must believe
 - 2) In fact, Paul once states belief as specifically believing in the resurrection of Christ
 - a) Romans 10:9 - because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
 - 3) The resurrection motivates and commands belief
- iii. This is tied to the fulfilled promise of belief
 - 1) Christ promised belief after the resurrection
 - 2) Christ provides for belief in the resurrection
 - 3) Therefore, the resurrection commands and motivates belief

3. Mary tells the disciples about the risen Christ

- i. When Mary sees the Risen Christ, she goes and tells the disciples (verse 18)
 - 1) She is the first 'witness' to the resurrection
 - 2) She goes and proclaims what she has seen
- ii. So, we ought to find motivation to the mission in the resurrection of Christ
 - 1) The mission is to be sent as witness of the resurrection of Christ
 - 2) The resurrection of Christ provides such joy, that this ought to be a natural response
- iii. This is tied to the fulfilled promise of sending
 - 1) Christ promised sending
 - 2) Christ sends after the resurrection
 - 3) The joy of the resurrection then commands and motivates sending

4. The disciples receive the Spirit

- i. When the disciples see the Risen Christ, Christ breathes on them the promise of the Spirit (verse 22)
 - 1) They receive power to the task through the resurrection
- ii. So, we find motivation to the Christian life in the resurrection of Christ
 - 1) We have been empowered by the Spirit through the resurrection
 - 2) Thus, the Christian life and all the commands and missions that it implies, ought not to be overwhelming to us
 - 3) The power of the Spirit motivates us to live for Christ in everything, especially the mission of the church
- iii. This is tied to the fulfilled promise of the Spirit
 - 1) Christ promised the empowering of the Spirit
 - 2) Christ breathes the power of the Spirit onto the disciples after the resurrection
 - 3) Therefore, the resurrection motivates us to live the Christian life
 - 4) Consider Romans 6:3-14 - Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

5. The disciples are entrusted with the church

- i. When the disciples see the Risen Christ, Christ entrusts them with the mission of the Church (verses 21, 23)
 - 1) They are sent as witness
 - 2) They are entrusted with the ministry of forgiveness
- ii. So, we find motivation to love and submit to the church in the resurrection of Christ
 - 1) The resurrection commands the ministry of the church
 - 2) The resurrection provides power for the church
 - 3) Therefore, the resurrection gives us motivation to 'do' the church, to love and submit to the church
- iii. This is tied to the fulfilled promise of washing
 - 1) Christ promises washing
 - 2) Christ washes in the crucifixion and resurrection
 - 3) Christ provides a ministry of washing in the resurrection
 - 4) Therefore, we should love and execute the ministry of washing, which is the church, because of the resurrection

Conclusion

a. Proposition

- i. This morning we asked, "What does John want us to understand about the resurrection?"
- ii. We decided that John presents the resurrection as the completion, fulfillment and initial down payment of the promises of Christ, especially the promises of John 13-17, so we must find our hope, motivation and power in the completed promises of the resurrection of Christ.

b. Promises Fulfilled

- i. The promise of believing
- ii. The promise of coming and going
- iii. The promise of sending
- iv. The promise of empowering
- v. The promise of washing

c. Mission Entrusted

- i. Motivation to believe based on the promise of believing
- ii. Motivation to study the things of Christ based on the promise of going
- iii. Motivation to go and witness based on the promise of sending
- iv. Motivation to live out the entirety of the Christian life based on the promise of empowering
- v. Motivation to dedicate ourselves to the mission of the church based on the promise of washing