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Sermon Notes

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Four Resurrections

John 5:19-29

I. Resurrection #1: Christ Rises from the Dead Personally

A. The Glorious Joy of Easter! Death is Defeated!!

1. All over the world, death's tyranny is felt acutely
2. Every year there is a harvest of death... a parade of mourning
 - a. Fathers and mothers lamenting bitterly for their children, taken by tragic accident or vicious disease
 - b. Husbands weeping for their beloved wives, taken from them in the prime of life... years later, they get up in the middle of the night, rummage through a drawer at three in the morning and find a wedding photo and bathe it in tears once again
 - c. Wives receiving the news by phone that "There has been an accident, and I'm sorry to inform you that..."; seized by grief as by a highway robber, beaten and thrown to the ground by the most pitiless enemy the human race has ever face: DEATH, the seemingly unconquerable foe
 - d. This foe does equally well in every country: it reigns as powerfully in Port au Prince, Haiti as it does in New York City; it reigns as powerfully in Sendai, Japan as in Durham, North Carolina
 - e. Age is no barrier... this merciless foe stalks down infants in their mothers' wombs and women laying weak and emaciated in a nursing home
 - f. Physical strength and vitality are no certain defense: Wes Leonard, a sixteen year-old high school basketball player in Fennville, Michigan hit the game winning shot for his basketball team, was carried off the floor on the shoulders of his undefeated team, then soon after collapsed; the entire gym got very quiet; this young man died a little over an hour later... it was a shocking reminder of the viciousness of death... its callous nature, its tyranny over the human race

Fennville School Superintendent Dirk Weeldreyer : "Wes was strong and powerful, and that makes this hard to handle. There's really no answer we can give when a tragedy like this happens."

No... there is no answer that WE CAN GIVE... we are utterly helpless before such a foe, lying prostrate, with death's foot on our neck; at any moment, without warning, that foe can finish us off and there's nothing we can do to stop it! There is no answer the WE CAN GIVE... but there is an answer God can give... and that answer is JESUS!!!

B. Life is of the Essence of God... God is ALIVE! IMMORTAL!!! (vs. 26)

1. From the beginning of John's Gospel, Jesus has been proclaimed as LIFE ITSELF

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

2. Over and over in this Gospel Jesus will call Himself LIFE

John 4:14 whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 6:48-51 I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 10:10-11 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

3. Here in this passage, He explains why He MUST LIVE

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

4. God is ALIVE... God is IMMORTAL

1 Timothy 6:15-16 God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Immortal = CANNOT DIE... God has life in Himself

This means that God is self-existent... He lives in and of Himself

And in the same way, the Father has granted to the Son to live in and of Himself as well

C. Christ's Resurrection Alluded to Here (vs. 26)

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

1. There was NO WAY that the Father could allow Jesus to remain dead
2. Jesus died for a very clear reason: to pay for our sins
 - a. All of us had sinned
 - b. We deserved to die for our sins... not just physical death, but eternal death in hell
 - c. Jesus came to die in our place, to take the punishment we deserved for our sins

Isaiah 53:5-6 he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

3. But on the third day, God raised Him from the dead, granting the Son to have life in Himself FOREVER
4. Death is immeasurably feeble compared to the life of the Father and the Son

Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

What an incredible statement!!! We humans link the word IMPOSSIBLE to death in that, once someone is dead, it is IMPOSSIBLE to do anything more for them... death has had the final word

BUT when it comes to Jesus, it is IMPOSSIBLE for death to keep its hold on Him

The word literally means that DEATH HAS NO POWER to hold Jesus!!!

The Father has granted to the Son to LIVE... and to LIVE FOREVER!

So, God raised Him from the dead on the third day

This bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day is the centerpiece of our faith, the centerpiece of the Gospel

It is only alluded to here in our passage this morning... BUT:

D. Openly Displayed Later (John 20)

1. John 20:1-9... the physical evidence of the resurrection
 - a. The stone rolled away from the entrance
 - b. The tomb was empty... Jesus wasn't there
 - c. The graveclothes in which Jesus had been wrapped were lying there wholly undisturbed in their original position; like a mysterious cocoon from which Jesus had emerged without disturbing them; the head cloth folded up by itself in another place in the tomb
 - d. The entire seen screaming what the angels said: "HE IS NOT HERE... HE IS RISEN, just as He said!!!"
2. Even better, the personal appearances of Jesus to His disciples
 - a. First, to Mary Magdalene there at the tomb
 - b. Then that evening to the disciples who were assembled in the upper room

John 20:19-20 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

- c. Then the next week to Thomas, who had doubted, and had said

John 20:25 "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

John 20:26-29 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

E. Christ IS the Resurrection (John 11:25-26)

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

It's not just that Jesus Himself was raised; nor is it merely that He is able also to raise us (which I'll discuss for the rest of the sermon)... it's not merely that He understands resurrection, or that He has experienced resurrection, or that he has power to do resurrections... it is that

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION...

Just like Jesus IS ETERNAL LIFE

Alright... so we're here this morning to celebrate Jesus' great achievement—His own defeat of death

BUT WHAT ABOUT US??? Can Jesus raise US UP also from the dead? The rest of the sermon is about that question!!

F. Christ's Resurrection is the Firstfruit from the Grave

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

Firstfruits means that there will be a vast harvest of resurrections from the dead

G. Because He Lives, We Also Will Live

John 14:19 Because I live, you also will live.

Jesus didn't die for Himself; neither was He raised for Himself... He died for US and was raised to life for US... to give us eternal life

II. Resurrection #2: Christ Resuscitates the Dead Physically

A. The Amazing Work the Father Gave Jesus to Do

1. The context of John 5: a miracle Jesus did on the Sabbath
2. The miracles were amazing works the Father had given Him to do
3. They displayed His power and His divine nature
4. They displayed His compassion and love
5. Jesus did all of these miracles at the command and by the power of God the Father

John 5:19-21 "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

6. Now the miracle Jesus had done in John 5 was a healing: he healed a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years
7. BUT Jesus in explaining this miracle to His enemies stated that He was going to do even greater works than this! And the greatest work of all Jesus would do was raising the dead and giving them life

B. The Sovereign Work of the Son

1. Jesus states clearly that this power of resurrection is something He dispenses according to His own will, according to His own choice

John 5:21 the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

2. This is the declaration of a KING... Jesus is the King of Life, the King of Resurrection... and He can raise anyone from the dead any time He chooses
3. It was no EFFORT for Him to heal the paralyzed man... He can heal anyone; neither is it any EFFORT to raise a dead person; there are not some dead people who are harder to raise than others!!!
4. Jesus gives life to whomever He chooses to give it
5. The miracles were merely SIGNS... pointing the way to the full display of Jesus' sovereign power in the Kingdom of Heaven

C. Technically: A Resuscitation not a Resurrection

1. So Jesus would physically raise the dead as a SIGN of His power to destroy death forever
2. But these physical resurrections were TEMPORARY... they were more resuscitations, raised to the same kind of physical existence the dead person had before

D. Clearest Display: Lazarus

1. Jesus' dear friend, along with his beloved sisters Martha and Mary
2. Lazarus died, and was buried; by the time Jesus got to the tomb, Lazarus had been dead for four days

3. Jesus commanded that the stone be removed from the entrance to Lazarus's tomb; He then prayed a simple prayer

John 11:41-42 Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

4. He then gave a powerful command
5. And Lazarus came forth!!!!
6. BUT with that resuscitation came no promise that Lazarus would never again die, that Lazarus would be free from all illness or the effects of aging; Lazarus is not alive now in Palestine, receiving visitors from all over the world as he testifies to the miracle-working power of Jesus!! No... Lazarus is dead, absent from the body and awaiting the eternal resurrection that is coming

E. A Sign of the Coming Kingdom of Christ... Not the Final Goal

1. The miracles Jesus did on earth were merely signs... like the signs on an Interstate that show that you are approaching Raleigh... 27 miles away
2. The world Jesus is bringing when He returns is PERFECT

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

III. Resurrection #3: Christ Raises the Dead Spiritually

A. Our Spiritual Death in Sin

Ephesians 2:1-2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world

B. Christ's Power to Save Displayed (vs. 24)

John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

1. Powerful single verse... the key to our salvation
2. We are naturally dead in transgressions and sins
3. As a result, we are under the wrath of God, in danger of final condemnation on Judgment Day

4. BUT at the moment that we hear Jesus' word by faith through the clear preaching of the gospel, WE COME ALIVE spiritually!!! Jesus makes us alive!!!
5. We at that very moment are SPIRITUALLY RESURRECTED... we have crossed over from death to life! Hallelujah! We can never die spiritually, though we will still die physically

C. This Resurrection is Happening NOW!! (vs. 25)

John 5:25 I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

1. All over the world, this spiritual resurrection is happening RIGHT NOW!!
2. Every single day of history, the Son of God is speaking through the Holy Spirit, through the words of the gospel, through evangelists and missionaries and pastors and simple common Christians who are witnessing
3. Jesus said the time IS COMING AND HAS NOW COME!!! This spiritual resurrection is happening right now
4. When you hear Jesus call out to you, you respond in faith; you say "Lord Jesus, I am a sinner, but I want to live with you forever! I want to walk with you now! Please save me!!" And you have crossed over from death to life

D. Come to Christ NOW!!!

1. I plead with you not to wait... Jesus said the time is coming and is NOW HERE
2. Paul says

2 Corinthians 6:2 I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

3. Don't wait for a better opportunity!

IV. Resurrection #4: Christ Raises the Dead Eternally

John 5:28-29 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out-- those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

A. Christ's Power to Judge Declared (vs. 22-23, 27)

John 5:22-23 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

John 5:27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

1. Judgment day is coming... in that day we will have to give an account for every careless word we have spoken
2. This passage reveals that the Judge of all the Earth is Jesus Christ Himself
3. The Father has granted Him the authority to sit in judgment on us all! He will sit on a great white throne and all the nations will be gathered before Him

B. The General Resurrection (vs.28-29)

John 5:28-29 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out-- those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

1. Jesus will call to EVERY DEAD person the same thing He called to Lazarus: "Come forth!!"
2. Every dead person will rise up out of their graves and stand before Him for final judgment
3. There will be a resurrection of BOTH the righteous and the wicked
4. Do not be amazed at this, Jesus says!! Do not refuse to believe it!
5. God gave us all bodies, and He intends that we spend eternity in bodies, whether in heaven or hell
6. Do not be amazed as though God doesn't have the power to do this! It doesn't matter if someone was burned up in a fiery plane crash; it doesn't matter if someone was eaten by a shark; it doesn't matter if you had a hideous disease that consumed your flesh and resulted in your death; or if you died in the ordinary way and your flesh was consumed by microbes and worms...
7. God is immensely more powerful and wiser than you can possibly imagine; do not be amazed at this...
8. ALL WHO ARE IN THEIR GRAVES will hear JESUS' voice and come out
 - a. Dead Muslim terrorists will hear Jesus' voice and come out
 - b. Dead Buddhist monks will hear Jesus' voice and come out
 - c. Dead German atheist professors of philosophy will hear Jesus' voice and come out
9. And they will all STAND BEFORE JESUS for judgment

C. The Basis of Judgment: Works

1. Every single person will be judged by their works
2. Those who have done good will rise to live forever in the New Heaven and New Earth
3. Those who have done evil will rise to die forever in hell
4. Jesus is the perfect judge, judging our works with absolute accuracy

D. The Basis of Salvation: Grace

1. Don't misunderstand: everyone is JUDGED (ASSESSED) by their works, but God's children will be SAVED BY GRACE through faith
2. No one deserves eternal life... no one will be justified by works; but rather by our works Christ will recognize us as His children

E. The Eternal State: Heaven or Hell

1. Those who have trusted in Christ now in life will live with Him in resurrection bodies forever and ever in the New Heaven and the New Earth
 - a. That place will be perfect... free as we have already said from all DEATH forever
 - b. That place will be beautiful... ravishing the eyes with the glories of the New Jerusalem and the New Universe that God will raise up from the ashes of this present world
 - c. That place will be incredibly satisfying to our souls... a place of feasting and celebration... of fellowship with other believers and with God
 - d. And Christ Himself will resurrect us from our graves to live with Him eternally there
2. But those who do not trust in Christ now will be condemned eternally... separated from all that joy, existing in their bodies in anguish and torment
3. The clear message of Easter is this

John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

V. Application

- A. Come to Christ Now While there is Time!

1. Jesus said “A time is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live...”
2. Are you hearing the voice of the Son of God this morning? Not merely a human pastor but as though Christ Himself were pleading with you through me?
3. Do you see the glories of Christ crucified, knowing that He died for your sins? Do you realize the complete and total forgiveness that awaits your repentance and faith in Jesus?
4. Do you yearn to cross over from death to life? Then DO IT NOW!!!
5. You don't know when you will die. Think of the shocking death of that 16 year-old boy in Michigan. Death comes unannounced and cannot be resisted.
6. Come to Christ now... He has power to raise you from the dead spiritually and give you eternal life even today... NOW!!

B. Worship Christ for His Resurrection from the Dead

1. Stand in awe of the power of Jesus over death
2. Meditate on Peter's statement in Acts 2, “It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him”
3. IMPOSSIBLE!!! What a sweet meditation on the infinite power of God for life
4. Meditate on how ALIVE God is... He alone “has life in Himself”, He alone is “immortal” in that death has no power over Him at all
5. Know that “In Christ we live and move and have our being...” and Jesus has risen from the dead!!

Revelation 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

6. Praise and worship Him for the Easter miracle forever!!

C. Worship Christ for His Power to Raise Us from the Dead Spiritually AND Physically

1. If you are a Christian today, you have already undergone the miracle of spiritual resurrection
2. You have already crossed over from death to life! And you shall NEVER DIE! Death cannot kill your soul... judgment day is no threat to your eternal life! You are united with Christ and He lives forever

3. Praise Him with great joy that you have already crossed over from death to life!
4. And praise Jesus that He can do anything He wants in this world... He can raise any dead person either spiritually or physically... God the Father has granted the Son the right to raise anyone He pleases to raise

D. Understand that Death is the Final Enemy... But that Someday Christ Will Destroy it Forever

1. Yes, Christ has the power to raise all the dead physically, and actually He will at the end of the world
2. In the meantime, understand that Jesus wept at Lazarus's tomb to show that death's present and temporary power is still potent and poisonous and will cause His beloved children much grief
3. If a loved one is struck down with a dread illness, pray for Christ to heal them... but understand He is no less loving or less powerful if He chooses not to
4. Death is the FINAL enemy... at the END OF ALL THINGS He will crush death forever
5. In the meantime, grieve over the dead, but not as those who have no hope
6. Easter gives us all IMMENSE and UNSHAKABLE HOPE!!!

E. Do the Good Works He Has Ordained for You to Do

1. Those who have done good will rise to live, said Jesus
2. "We are His workmanship, created for good works" said Paul
3. We must work the works of God while there is time
4. If you are alive spiritually, you will BEAR GOOD FRUIT for the glory of God
5. So, use your spiritual gifts by the power of the Holy Spirit and bless others
 - a. If your gift is giving, then give generously
 - b. If your gift is encouraging, do it powerful and consistently
 - c. If your gift is evangelism, spread the word widely and fruitfully
 - d. If your gift is prayer, get down on your knees day after day as a prayer warrior for others

- e. If your gift is hospitality, open your home warmly to others and give them a foretaste of heavenly pleasure