

John 20-11-31
The results of the resurrection!

Preamble: mission statement

Prayer: please join me in prayer....

Sermon introduction:

Today at 3:30 pm, 113 million people will watch the Kansas City Chiefs battle the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl 58.

The Super Bowl Sunday has become a massive event with staggering financial implications.

Consumers will spend an estimated 17 billion dollars on food, drink, and other party related items.

Today, hungry fans will order 12.5 million pizzas.

They will eat 88 million pounds of cheese.

They will drink 325 million gallons of beer.

They will eat 1.4 billion wings (Hungryfan.com).

Corporations will spend \$7 million for a 30 second commercial slot.

This year, Taylor Swift's presence alone will have an estimated 200–300-million-dollar economic implications.

There is also a negative economic impact. According to the Washington Post, seventeen million people will stay home from work on Monday because of the Super bowl related "issues." (Washington Post Article)

This historic event has massive implications. But no one will feel the implications of Super bowl 58 in 50 years.

Yet, a far more significant historic event happened 2,000 years ago that continues to have massive implications for everyone in human history. It is arguably the most significant event in the history of the world.

The event is the resurrection of the son of God. Last week we looked at the fact of the resurrection (if you are a skeptic watch last week's sermon), this week we will look at the implications of the resurrection.

What are the implications of this historic event? There are several and they are massive, our text highlights three.

The resurrection bolsters faith.

The resurrection fuels mission.

The resurrection brings life.

First, the resurrection bolsters faith!

Whose faith?

The resurrection bolstered Mary's faith.

John 20:11–18 (ESV) — 11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. **12** And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. **13** They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Clearly these angels were hiding their angelic glory from Mary. Otherwise, she would have been terrified.

14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." **16** Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). **17** Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

When Mary saw the risen Christ standing in front of her, the evidence for his bodily resurrection was irrefutable. Therefore, she believed.

The resurrection bolstered Mary's faith. In addition...

The resurrection bolstered Thomas's faith (eventually).

John 20:24–29 (ESV) — 24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Thomas insists on proof for the resurrection before he believes. Makes sense, right! Contrary to popular belief, people were just as skeptical of resurrections then as they are now. This is well documented in Tom Wright's book "The Resurrection of the Son of God." Maybe you too have doubts.

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although 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, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." **28** Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas saw the evidence.
He touched Jesus.
He placed his finger in Christ's wounds.
And he finally believed.

Because of the preponderance of evidence, he joyfully exclaims, "My Lord and my God!"

This is arguably the clearest and simplest confession of the deity of Christ in the entire NT. Thomas uses the two strongest words for deity in the Scriptures. He calls Jesus "Lord" (used in the Septuagint for the divine covenant name "Yahweh") and "God" (see 1:1, 14; Rom. 9:5).

It is critical to note that Jesus accepts these words of praise with zero protest. He does not say, "Woo, woo, woo, calm down Thomas, I'm just a man. It is a sin to worship a man. This is very clear in the OT. Thomas, you are a Jew and I'm a Jew, we both know that is sinful to worship humans." No, Jesus clearly accepts the worship of Thomas with zero protest.

Despite what other religions teach, Jesus clearly and unequivocally, claimed to be God.

Back to Thomas. Why did he believe that Jesus was God? The evidence for the resurrection.

29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

What do these words mean?

Jesus is not discounting evidence. He is not a fideist, someone who insists on blind faith. He is simply saying, "Thomas, you believe that I'm God because you saw my physical body. But others, will believe without seeing my physical body. They will believe on the evidence of the Word of God itself."

With that said, Jesus very compassionately offers Thomas physical evidence of the resurrection by showing him his scars. Why does he show him the evidence? He loves Thomas.

The resurrection bolsters Thomas's faith.

Illustration:

I don't know about you, but I relate more to Thomas than Mary. I'm going to get personal for a moment.

In 2013, around the time I planted GCF North, I went through a season of doubt. I remember reading portions of the OT, portions I had read numerous times before, and being disturbed. I was specifically disturbed by some of the God sanctioned violence.

I questioned the goodness of God, which lead to bigger questions about God's existence, the reality of miracles, and the exclusivity of Christianity. To be clear I never stopped believing, but I had a lot of questions to work through.

This put me on an intellectual journey that lasted a few years. During my journey, I read several books on apologetics to get answers, which strengthen my faith.

I constantly felt like the man in **Mark 9:24** who says to Jesus "I believe, help my unbelief."

Looking back, I'm thankful for that journey of doubt because now, I'm more convinced than ever of the truth claims of Christianity.

Why did I go through a season of doubt? Was it sinful unbelief, spiritual warfare (Satan hurling darts of doubt at my soul), or just being human? I don't know...

But I sure felt like Thomas. I needed evidence to believe. And I'm so thankful that God did not say to me, "You need to just believe. Evidence does not matter. Take a blind leap of faith."

No... God very graciously and providentially directed me to some superb resources that strengthened my faith.

Mention a few...

The case for Christ (all the "Case for" books).

The Reason for God by Tim Keller

I don't have enough faith to be an Atheist

Reflections on the Existence of God

Confronting Christianity

Christian Apologetics by Groothuis

Etc...

Application:

Maybe you have doubts just like Thomas.

What should you do?

Don't doubt alone, talk to a friend, talk to a pastor, get some help.

In addition, don't waste your doubt. Piper wrote a little booklet called "Don't waste your cancer." Explain... God can use your doubts for good, by strengthening your faith.

Furthermore, don't judge others. We must recognize that we are all wired differently—some need evidence and some don't.

The resurrection bolsters faith, but it does so much more, which brings us to the second heading...

First, the resurrection bolsters faith.

Second, the resurrection fuels mission.

This brings us to John 20:19-23. These verses are called "The Johannine great commission." Let's examine them in detail.

John 20:19-21 (ESV) — 19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

The disciples probably expected a rebuke from Jesus for abandoning him at his arrest. Instead, he says "peace be with you." This is amazing grace!

20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. **21** Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

The father sent Jesus into the world to rescue us. Now Jesus sends us into the world to rescue others. This is our mission!

But we need power for this mission, which brings us to verse 22.

John 20:22 (ESV) – 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Much ink has been spilled on these words, since other texts seem to indicate that the disciples don't receive the Spirit until Pentecost, 50 days later. How do we explain this apparent discrepancy?

Some scholars think that Christ's act of breathing on the disciples is merely symbolic or a foreshadowing of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Other scholars think that the apostles received a private infilling here and then a public empowering of the Spirit at Pentecost. (Grant Osborne, 446-447).

R. C. Sproul argues that the OT prophets communicated through their words *and* through their actions, acting out certain dimensions of God's message yet to be fulfilled. Sproul believes that Christ is acting like an OT prophet in this instance. In other words, Jesus is giving the disciples an object lesson about what will happen on the Day of Pentecost. (Sproul, John, 361)

No matter how you interpret this specific passage, the application is clear. When it comes to fulfilling Christian's mission, all Christians living under the New Covenant (that us) have access to amazing, supernatural, power.

Where does this power come from? The resurrected Christ. His resurrection fuels the mission.

But what is the nature of the mission? Let's keep reading...

John 20:23 (ESV) – 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

What does this cryptic phrase mean?

Several scholars point out that the phrases "they are forgiven" and "it is withheld" are both perfect-tense verbs in Greek and could also be translated, "they have been forgiven" and "it has been withheld."

One scholar writes,

"The idea is not that individual Christians or churches have authority on their own to forgive or not forgive people. Rather, as the church proclaims the gospel message of forgiveness of sins in the power of the Holy Spirit (see v. 22), it simply reflects what God in heaven has already done (see note on Matt. 16:19)." (ESV Global Study Bible)

What is the point? We have an amazing mission. The risen Christ has sent us forth to preach the gospel in supernatural resurrection power.

The resurrection fuels mission, by giving us holy spirit boldness.

Illustration:

In 1858, John Paton sailed for the New Hebrides islands to preach the gospel to the cannibals. These were the same cannibals who murdered and then ate two missionaries 20 years earlier.

When Mr. Dickson heard that Paton was going to the cannibals, he said, "The cannibals! You will be eaten by cannibals!"

Paton responded,

"Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms; and in the Great Day my Resurrection body will rise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer." (Autobiography of Paton)

Once he arrived on the island, his life was in constant danger. He writes,

"Our continuous danger caused me oftentimes to sleep with my clothes on, that I might start at a moment's warning."

Again, he writes,

"My enemies seldom slackened their hateful designs against my life. . . . A wild chief followed me around for four hours with his loaded musket, and, though often directed towards me, God restrained his hand."

Again, he writes,

"One morning at daybreak I found my house surrounded by armed men, and a chief intimated that they had assembled to take my life."

Once more, he writes,

"[Once] when natives in large numbers were assembled at my house, a man furiously rushed on me with his axe, but a tribal Chief snatched a spade with which I had been working, and dexterously defended me from instant death." (Autobiography of Paton)

Paton and his wife preached the gospel boldly for 40 years in this hostile environment.

Where did their courage come from? They tapped into resurrection power.

Application:

If you are a Christian, God has given you an extraordinary mission. This mission is not just for the super spiritual Christians and the pastors, it is for all Christians.

It is for everyone who has been filled by the Holy Spirit as a result of the resurrection.

Who are the people God has placed in your life?

Co-workers

Family members

Your local coffee shop barista

Friends at the gym

Neighbors???

Telling folks about Jesus, may sound terrifying. You don't know what to say? You don't know how to bring things up. I get it....

But God has given you supernatural resurrection power. You have the same power for boldness that John Paton had.

You have the same power for boldness that raised Christ from the dead.

The resurrection fuels this mission. How? When Christ rose from the grave, he poured out the Holy Spirit into all his disciples, including you.

There is simply no way for us to fulfill the mission in our own strength, it is literally impossible. None of us are brave enough.

This means, that when you are having that conversation with your non-Christian friend, you must secretly cry out to the risen Christ for boldness. He secured this power for you when he rose from the grave.

The resurrection fuels the mission. But it does even more, bringing us to the last heading.

The resurrection bolsters faith.

The resurrection fuels mission.

Third, the resurrection brings life.

John 20:30–31a (ESV) — 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,...

These verses are the thesis of John's gospel.

John wrote this gospel to display the sign of Jesus, so that people would see the signs and believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.

What were the signs in John's gospel?

Changing water into wine (2:1-11)

Healing the official's son (John 4)

Healing a disabled man at the pool (John 5)

Feeding the 5000 (John 6)

Walking on Water (John 6)

Healing a man born blind (John 9)

Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11)

Rising from the dead himself (John 20)

This last sign miracle is the greatest of them all...

John cares deeply about evidence. He is not a fidiest. He displays as much evidence as possible to get people to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, the risen and reigning one. Why?

What happens when we believe? We experience life!

John 20:31 (ESV) —31 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.

According to several texts in John's gospel, this life is "eternal life."
Eternal life is a quality of life.
Eternal life is the best life available because it is rooted in knowing the triune God.
The triune God is the greatest fountain of joy in the universe.

There is no greater source of joy.
There is no greater source of life.
There is no greater source of peace.
There is no greater source of satisfaction.
There is no greater source of happiness.

There is no greater rock to be anchored to, when life blows us of course.

Application:

Why don't we experience this type of life? We look for life in the wrong things...

C. S. Lewis famously wrote,

"If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." (Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 26)

The Gospel of John was written to help us understand that there is a far greater source of pleasure than the mud pies of this world.

Eternal life is not found in...

Acquiring more stuff.
Earning advanced degrees.
Having the perfect grandkids.
Having the perfect body.
Having all the right human relationships.
The perfect marriage.
Pay raises.

Political freedom.
Successful children.
An endless round of golf in the retirement years...

All these things ultimately leave us empty.

Today is super bowl Sunday. Maybe you are thinking, what if I won the super bowl?

After winning three Super bowls and acquiring all the wealth, fame, and success that go with winning, Tom Brady famously said,

"Why do I have three Super Bowl rings, and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, "Hey man, this is what is." I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think: God, it's gotta be more than this. I mean this can't be what it's all cracked up to be. I mean I've done it. I'm 27. And what else is there for me?" (*Interview with Daniel Schorn, www.cbsnews.com. November 4, 2005*)

Life, eternal life, the joy-filled life is only found in one place—Jesus Christ.

Have you been looking to the wrong things for life? If so, you must repent and believe the gospel. What does this look like? It looks like asking God to forgive you and change your heart and behavior and then receiving his forgiveness.

Conclusion:

What will happen if Brock Purdy, the quarterback of the 49ers, wins today? It will greatly impact his life.

He will become a world champion.
He will no longer be criticized as a game manager.
He will get a \$164k bonus.
Companies will line up to offer him endorsement deals.

If he wins, his life will be greatly impacted.

But no one will remember Brock Purdy or Super Bowl 58 in 50 years. Sorry, 49ers fans. In 50 years, no one will feel the effects of the Super bowl 58.

But another event happened 2000 years ago that has implications for all of human history. That event was the resurrection of the son of God.

What are the implications of the resurrection?

The resurrection bolsters faith.
The resurrection fuels mission.
The resurrection brings life.

Let's pray...