

“The Life Worth Living!”

1 Corinthians 15:2-4

Intro. – Paul “Bear” Bryant, legendary coach of Alabama was forced to put his second string quarterback in because his first string quarterback was injured. There were two minutes left in the game and Auburn was nipping at their heels with a 5 point difference. Bryant yelled to his quarterback, “Whatever you do, do not pass! Run the ball all four plays. And then if we have to hold them, our defense will do the job.” Well, long story short, the 2nd string quarterback did just as Coach said, until the fourth play the handoff was dropped. He picked it up and saw his split end wide open in the in the end zone. What he didn’t see was the fastest man on the field, the safety for Auburn also saw the pass coming. He jumped in front of the Alabama split end and intercepted the ball and started racing down the field. The quarterback, not very fast normally, raced down the field, caught the man, tackled him and Alabama won the game. Coach Pat Dye of Auburn said later to Bear Bryant, “I read the scouting reports, and that 2nd string quarterback was supposed to be slow. How did he catch my man, the fastest man on the field?” Bear Bryant replied, “It’s simple. Your man was running for a touchdown. My man was running for his life!”

The early Christians were moved and motivated to effective action. When given the opportunity they lived, taught, preached and talked of Jesus and His resurrection. Why the resurrection?

1) It Was True – Jesus had in fact risen bodily from the grave...

2) It Was Relevant – i.e. it was related or had bearing on their lives...

Here’s my point: the risen Christ was transforming lives! These two reasons ought to be the compelling factors for motivating our lives. I pray none assembled here question the truth that Jesus really did resurrect and that He is alive today! It is true – He’s alive!!

But what about the second reason – is the resurrection of Jesus relevant? What significance does the fact of Jesus’ rising from the grave play in our lives right now? Does this historical event make any difference to the everyday frustrations we experience? Does the resurrection have bearing on our present lives and if so how?

Purpose: to see how the relevancy of Christ’s resurrection is demonstrated in our lives

Through this message we’ll look at five *trouble spots* that afflict us all from time to time. We will learn how the resurrection of Jesus assures us of *The Life Worth Living*. We’ll learn this by looking at how it touches our sense of guilt, inadequacy, discontent, lostness, and loneliness:

I THE SENSE OF GUILT (Romans 4:25)

- we all know too well what it is like to *feel bad* about something because we’re guilty:

A. We Have Sinned

1. Bible does not conceal fact you and I are guilty – morally responsible Holy God Whom we hurt!
2. Many do not *feel guilty* before God, but whether you feel it or not = you and I are guilty!!!
 - a. Romans 3:23 “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*”
 - b. James 2:10 “*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*”
3. Our problem is not so much guilty feelings – our problem is real guilt – we’ve wronged God!

B. Jesus Came to Deal With Sin

1. N.T. explains Christ’s death for this purpose = event so central that 4 Gospels focus on this...
2. Christ came to settle our debts = most difficult/costly enterprise ever undertaken in history.
3. Isaiah depicts Christ’s coming as a *Lamb* = death was: 1) voluntary 2) vicious 3) vicarious...
4. Christ took on the punishment for our sins upon Himself... Jesus really did pay it all!

C. Resurrection Proves Jesus Did

1. Was the death of Christ sufficient? Was the cry “*It is finished!*” a cry of defeat or triumph? Did Christ deal with sin or did sin destroy Him. Answers to these ?’s are found in Christ’s resurrection.

2. Did Christ die and rise again? Yes! I can be assured, punishment for my sins is gone – in that sense I have been acquitted, my guilt has been removed

II THE SENSE OF INADEQUACY (Ephesians 1:18-20)

- sense of shame for the past isn't only thing bothers us – chronic failure to change in needed areas

A. Christ Offers to Share Life

1. This sense of inadequacy renders you and me fruitless for Him... Christ wants to alter this.
2. 2 Corinthians 12:9 *“But He said to me, ‘My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*
3. This apostle laid in prison – could have been resentful, discouraged, defeated; instead, wrote of joy, rejoicing, doing all things through Christ Who strengthened him.
4. How? By the presence of His Spirit = gift promised to all who become Christians...

B. Christ Offers Unlimited Power

1. Sir James Simpson, pioneered use of chloroform in surgery saving the world lot of pain was asked, “What do you regard as your greatest discovery?” The expected answer was “chloroform.” The inquirer was shocked. Simpson responded, “My greatest discovery was Jesus Christ.”
2. The power of God raised Christ from the tomb is the same power available to raise you and me from the rut of our inadequacies.
3. Thus, the message of the risen Christ deals directly with our inadequacies – when we are weak...

III THE SENSE OF DISCONTENTMENT (John 15:11; 16:22)

- prevailing characteristic of our world is its chronic discontentment. Though we have more material advantages than anytime in history we're conspicuously unhappy as a whole:

A. Joy is Promised

1. Prior to the resurrection the disciples were in utter despair...
2. After resurrection – lives were changed... rather than cowering away, they became conquerors.
3. What explains this phenomenal change? Resurrection faith... what explains difference in Christians today – world is discontent but Christians are anything but!

B. Joy is Secure

1. When we're reconciled to God (i.e. living at peace with God) no surprise in our being content.
2. Poise and contentment is ours all based entirely on the fact that Christ is alive/enabling you/me.

Resurrection of Jesus is relative to our sense of contentment or lack thereof...

IV THE SENSE OF LOSTNESS (Acts 2:37)

- John Lennon wrote song: “Nowhere Man”

He's a real nowhere man sitting in his nowhere land,
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody.
Doesn't have a point of view, knows not where he's go'in to
Isn't he a bit like me and you?

A. Breakdown of Relationships

1. The home, divorce, racial bigotry – back in 1990 51% of job applicants in US were women.
2. One of Christianity's greatest attractions is fellowship – a family under the blood of Christ!

B. The Lack of Purpose/Direction

1. Such is so evident it screams out on a daily basis to us.
2. Risen Lord gives purpose (we live for Him...) and direction (heaven bound...)
3. Results of this new fellowship/purpose/direction? Urgency to tell world that He LIVES!

Jesus is relevant to our present sense of lostness

V THE SENSE OF LONELINESS (Matthew 28:20)

- Illus. – March 1934, Admiral Richard Byrd set up camp in a 9 by 13 foot hut buried in heart Antarctica. 6 months remained alone 123 miles from any other human – book *Alone* 1938
- loneliness far more common place experience today
- A. Jesus Knows About Being Alone
 1. Family, friends, even Father forsook Him...
 2. Significant to note the risen Lord's parting words were "*I will be with you always...*"
- B. Jesus is With His
 1. First century Christians were deeply conscious that Christ was with them – lived worked played in His presence...
 2. We too have the opportunity to be just *aware/conscious* of His presence. Why/How? He lives.
 3. Christians past/present testify there's not a friend like Jesus!

Conclusion: Joseph Scriven was a man who experienced the friendship during a life filled with tragedy. As young man in Ireland, 1840 his intended bride accidentally drowned night before their wedding. Then began training for military cadet but poor health stopped this dream. Moving to Canada, he worked with underprivileged and physically handicapped, but tragedy continued to stalk his ways. Again, plans for another wedding were cut short when his second finance died following a brief illness.

Through most of his life, Joseph Scriven experienced loneliness, meager pay for menial work and physical illness. In fact, if ever there was a good example of a life not worthy living, seemingly it would have been his.

Joseph had a friend, however. And one day in the midst of his "tragic" life Joseph Scriven penned some words in honor of this friend. They became the words to a hymn, a hymn I'm sure with which you are familiar. It's a hymn that summarizes this message and expresses the convictions of all who claim the living Christ as Lord and Savior:

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry,
Everything to God in prayer.
O what grief we often forfeit,
O, what needless pain we bear.
All because we do not carry,
Everything to God in prayer.

Surely, a friend who can reconcile us with the Father, strengthen us in our inadequacies, find us in our lostness, and give us companionship in our loneliness is a friend worth knowing. Do you know Him? Is Jesus your friend? More significantly, is He your Lord and Savior? In short, living for the living Christ is *the life worth living!*