

Series: *Non-Series Message*
Message Title: Christ's Resurrection Means Our Reconciliation
Date: Sunday, April 16, 2017
Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Speaker: David H. McKinley
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

I am grateful to see and be with you today, and to share the testimony of what has been my greatest strength and deepest comfort in recent days—the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the hope shared by all who have put their faith and trust in Him!

Many of you know about the death of my father in recent days—10 days shy of his 90th birthday. As a result, I have often preached the message of Easter to myself. So this day is a live presentation of something I have been rehearsing for some time.

Thank you for your love, prayer and support—the cards, messages, beautiful flowers and many expressions of love. Grief is real, but so is God's great grace often ministered through you, and I rejoice.

Today we are here to celebrate and declare that Resurrection Sunday is much more than an annual holiday; it is a historical reality!

Jesus is alive! The result is powerful, practical and permanent. There are two observations/convictions I want to share with you today.



1. The Resurrection is a Historical Reality— It Gives Reason for an Immovable Hope!

The resurrection is not a “Fake News” story!

One of the biggest topics discussed this year has been Fake News. Fake News is something we have all become accustomed to in print media as we stand at checkout counters in grocery stores. For example, we might read, “Elvis is alive and has been living in Tahiti for the past 40 years.”

In our digital world, there are actually websites designed to deliberately publish hoaxes, propaganda and disinformation. They use social media to drive attention to their websites in an attempt to amplify the impact of their efforts and create newsworthy discussions.

Of course, the fake sites are often sensational and completely unreliable. To some degree,

we have all watched this happen in journalism since the advent of the 24/7 news stations. If you want viewers, keep the shocking headlines in view.

But when it comes to the fact of the resurrection...

- **We have eyewitness accounts.**

Each of Gospels tells us about eyewitnesses:

Matthew 28:1-6—"come and see"

Mark 16:1-7

Luke 24:1-9

John 20:1-9

"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand... For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-6 ESV).

- **We observe life transformation.**

What made Peter, who denied Christ, become one of the principle voices that proclaimed Christ? Peter had seen Jesus!

“This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32 ESV).

- **We can trace the historical/cultural revolution.**

“About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call Him a man. For He was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned Him to a cross, those who had first come to love Him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about Him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after Him, has still to this day not disappeared.” —Flavius Josephus: *Antiquities of the Jews* (First Century Roman, Jewish Scholar, Historian)

It was referenced by Eusebius (Fourth Century). He used the works of Josephus in his writing of *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

The decline of Rome dovetailed with the rise of Christianity. Rome was the city most associated with efforts to exterminate the Christian movement and it is now the most associated with the continuation of the Christian faith. Only a handful of historians can name the Caesars, but today, people all over the world name their boys Matthew, Mark, Luke, John or Paul!

- **We have two millennia of mission and ministry.**

Works, worship and witness are all done in the name of Jesus.

The fundamental question is this: Who is Jesus Christ?

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man

and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else He would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this Man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” —C.S. Lewis

If Jesus is the Son of God and rose from the dead, we have a lasting, abiding and enduring hope!

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this

you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:3-9 ESV).

“No matter how devastating our struggles, disappointments, and troubles are, they are only temporary. No matter what happens to you, no matter the depth of tragedy or pain you face, no matter how death stalks you and your loved ones, the Resurrection promises you a future of immeasurable good.” —Josh McDowell

2. The Resurrection is a Transformational Message—It is the Foundation of Our Worship and Witness

In the midst of all the expressions of hope spoken today, the truth is, we live in a world

filled with hell. Heartache and heartbreak abound and brokenness is all around us.

There is nothing harder or sadder than broken relationships—sad, painful and enduring in all our lives.

Easter is a declaration of good news—great news actually. The message of the resurrection of Christ means the affecting of a reconciliation of God with us. It was His doing, not our own. And yet, we are the recipients of His goodness and grace through the work of Christ for us.

In Christ, God (the offended party because of human rebellion seen in our stubbornness and sinfulness) took the initiative for us to be brought into friendship and fellowship with Him.

Unless someone takes the initiative, relationships remain broken. Apart from someone saying, "Forgive me, I'm sorry, I was wrong," then alienation and isolation remain. Yet, when one takes the initiative, when one offers forgiveness and extends peace, there can be reconciliation.

There was a time in my life when I was religious, but frustrated. I was a performer, but could not make myself good enough. I learned about God's work of reconciliation and it changed my life. I am living proof of a living hope in Christ.

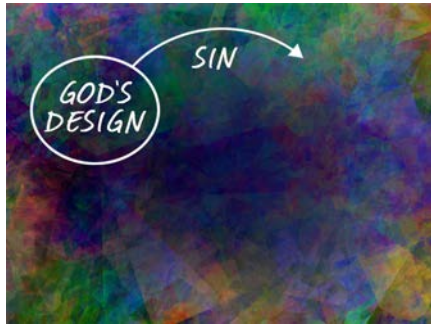
"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:17-20 ESV).



God's Design (original creation)

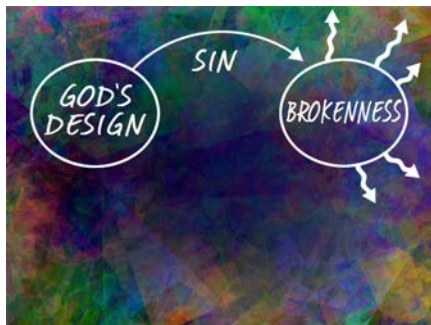
We were made by God for a relationship

with Him. He is the Creator and we are the creatures. You were made to know God and apart from this knowledge, life is fragmented and futile.



Sin

We have chosen and choose each day to run our lives without God. Sin separates us from God and His design.

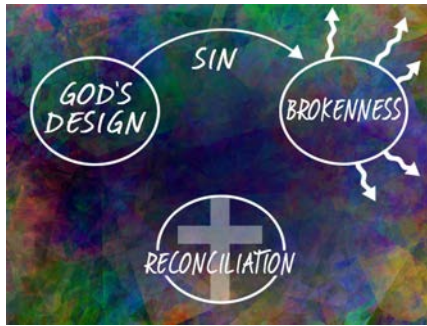


Our Brokenness

We have chosen to live our lives without God. We are alienated from Him and ensnared in a broken world.

This is what creates all other alienation and devastation. Our relationships don't work and our achievements leave us empty. We try to find ways to fulfill ourselves (selfishness, sex, success, even service and sacrifice), but we never find significance without our Creator.

No matter where we turn or look, there is chaos in our world. Just look at story after story—human confusion, suffering and the endemic problem of man's inhumanity to man. It is not difficult to see that something is wrong, but we are blind to the real nature of the problem. Although we might look to education, deprivation or confusion, the real problem is our fallenness and brokenness.



Reconciliation

God is not indifferent to this matter, but He initiated interference and rescue by sending Christ to resolve the conflict and to offer an escape.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life... Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God... Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but ***the wrath of God*** remains on him” (John 3:16, 18, 36 ESV, italics added for emphasis).

God’s wrath is real and remains, but in His love, He acts for us.

“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8 ESV).

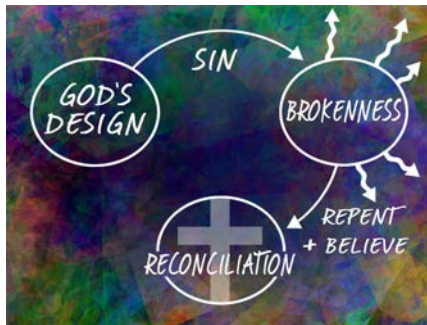
In Jesus, God has reconciled sinners to Himself.

Jesus did not come to tell us what to do to make ourselves Christians; He came to do something for us—to save us, to reconcile us to God. Jesus did this by His death, burial and resurrection.

“We are adopted into God’s family through the resurrection of Christ from the dead in which He paid all our obligations to sin, the law, and the devil, in whose family we once lived. Our old status lies in His tomb. A new status is ours through His resurrection.”

—Sinclair B. Ferguson

When you see, understand and believe this, it will take away the “I’m trying to be a Christian. I’ve done my best. I’m working to get there.” No! It is Christ alone who provides reconciliation. We must repent and believe.



Repent and Believe

We are wrong before God and need to come to Him. Conviction leads us to repentance. It is mysterious and transforming. God uses all kinds of things—His law to show us brokenness and His love to remind us that we

have offended it. And He uses His Word to speak to us of our fragmentation.

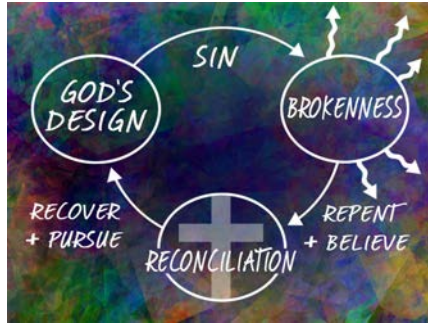
Our need is more than a *life hasn't been all it could be*. Our lives need some attention. *I want a better marriage. I'd like to be more fulfilled*, etc. This need is deeper than a felt-need; it is the fundamental crisis of our lives.

The way we see our needs and God sees our needs are different. Our great need is forgiveness and reconciliation—only Jesus Christ!

For this reason I believe what Jesus did was for me! He took my sin, failure, guilt and bore it all that I might be delivered from brokenness and experience His reconciliation.

What are contemporary views of religion? *We do our best and God rewards us*. No! Our best attempts are worthless. God forgives and restores because Christ died for us.

This is crucial, not superficial. Your eternal destiny hangs on this matter. The Bible is emphatic—Jesus and Jesus alone saves.



Recover and Pursue

When we repent and receive (believe), God reconciles and restores. God takes us into the sphere of life where we begin to discover His truth and design in our lives. God engages us in His great purpose to lead others to know the joy and hope of this reconciliation.

“In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:19-20 ESV).

Today, I implore you! Don't let Easter be about everything but what you need most—new life in Christ and reconciliation to God through Christ.

I started with the historic reality of the resurrection and Christ's victory. Let me close with this:

It was in the early morning of April 15, 1912, when the RMS Titanic, a British passenger liner, sank in the North Atlantic Ocean after colliding with an iceberg during her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York City.

Of the 2,224 passengers and crew aboard, more than 1,500 died, making it one of the deadliest commercial peacetime maritime disasters in modern history. It was the largest ship afloat at the time it entered service

There were only two kinds of passengers. Not rich/poor, educated/uneducated—only saved and lost.

There are only two conditions today—those in Christ and those outside of Christ.

“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV).

God transforms sinners into saints—the point where grace brings peace for us.

(Diagram taken from *3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide*, © 2014, North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Alpharetta, Georgia.)