

The Risen Lord & The Narrow Way
1 Corinthians 15:17-22; Romans 10:9-11
Reading: Acts 16:25-34

Bethany Baptist Church
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...pray...

What do people put on *Craigslist*?

Things that aren't *valuable* anymore? Stuff they don't *care about*...?

Craigslist.... Pastor Craig's got a list! You could call it "*Craig's list*!" ☺

But it's not a *for-sale list*... "*Craig's list*" is a *prayer list*!

Everyone in this room is on my list!

But a few of you are in a *special section*!

I'm praying for you *all the time*, some of you for *years*....

I'm asking God to *save you*, to pour His *mercy & grace* on your *mind & heart*.

So I've been *telling you the Gospel* this month & I've *been reviewing my list almost every day*!

So don't you even *think* about dying before I finish telling you these *six truths* (*final 2* this morning)!

Here's where we've been, so far...

1. **God *owns* you.**
2. **You *disowned* God.**
3. **God *judges* sinners.**
4. **Jesus *died* for sinners.**

This morning...

5. **Jesus *lives* again.**
6. **You *must choose*...*be careful how you choose*.**

Let's *quickly catch up* on those *first four* truths:

Here is the *first fact* that everyone needs to hear about God: *God made you*. He made you *personally*. He made you in His *own image*. Because He *made* you, He *owns* you. Because He *owns* you, you are *accountable* to Him.

Next truth: You *disowned* God. God is your *Creator-King*, but you are a willful *rebel*. You *break* His laws. You *make* your own rules. You *pretend* He doesn't *care* or doesn't even *exist*. You're a *rebel* – a *sinner*.

Third: God *judges* sinners. The penalty for sinful rebellion is *death* followed by *judgment*. Someone must be *punished* for sin – or God is not really *just & holy*. ***Does this sound like good news... !?! Don't give up yet...***

Fourth fact. Jesus *died* for sinners! Here comes the *good news* – someone must be *punished* for your sins – but it doesn't *have* to be you! God sent His own *perfect & sinless* Son, *Jesus the God-man*, to *die* in the place of *sinners*. Jesus died as a *substitute* payment: *God made Christ who knew no sin to **be sin on our behalf**...*

Jesus *died*, but that's not the *end* of the story!

Because the crucified Savior was *buried*, but raised to life on the **3rd day!**

Angel (Garden tomb early on the 3rd day): “*Why do you seek the Living One among the dead, He is not here, but He has risen, just as He said!*”

Jesus is *alive* right now.

This isn't some old *Sunday School story* that you can *dismiss* w/ a *nod & smile*, & then hastily *move on*.

It's time to choose! You must come to *grips* w/ God's only offer: to *follow* His Son Jesus as your *Lord & Savior*...or to continue under the *certain threat* of God's ***wrath***.

Jesus is *alive!*

1. But how do you **know** this *Gospel* story is *for real*? What if Jesus just died this *tragic martyr's death*, but it didn't really *do* anything?
 - a. **Let's read** a crucial text on the non-negotiable necessity of a *real* – historic – *resurrection*: **1 Cor 15:17-22**. The Corinthians were troubled by a very *basic question*: is the resurrection of the dead *true*?
 - b. Let's look *hard* at **v.17**. Paul makes his point in the *negative*, and it's very clear: *if Jesus has **not** been raised, your faith is worthless*.
 - i. Your faith is *worthless...why*? How is *faith* in Christ's *death* also tied this incredible claim of His *resurrection*?
 - ii. Because...*if Jesus has **not** been raised...you are still in your sins!* Jesus' crucifixion paid for *nothing*.
 - c. Here is Paul's *point*: The Resurrection is about *proof*. Jesus *died* on the cross *in your place to pay for your sins*. The **proof** that God *accepted* Christ's payment is that God *raised His Son from the grave!* *That's* how you know! The *resurrection* **proves** the *atonement power of the cross!*
 - d. Paul goes on to *draw* a very *startling conclusion (19)*: if you only believe the *crucifixion w/o* believing the *resurrection* – you're *pitiful!* You are *wasting* your time; you should have stayed *home* & stayed in *bed!*
 - e. But it's all *real (read vv. 20-22)!* You *aren't* pitiful. The resurrection **is** true. Christ *lives* – He is alive *right now*. As sure as you are *here* – He is *there!* His resurrection *proves* His payment *really pays*.
 - i. And just as every *son & daughter of Adam* are *lost* in their sins,
 - ii. ...even so, every *woman & man* who *turns to Christ* – trusting in His *death* & His *resurrection* - is *forgiven*, & will *live*.
 - f. That resurrection *proves* that God accepted Jesus' *death for sinners*.

2. The Bible says *even more* about the *reality* & the *results* of the *resurrection*. Here are **five truths** the Gospel teaches about Jesus' *resurrection*:

- a. *First*, the resurrection is an *essential* part of the Gospel message. Paul *distills* the Good News message down to these **4** basic truths: *For I delivered to you as of 1st importance that which I also received, that Christ **died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, that He was **buried**, that He was **raised** on the 3rd day according to the Scriptures, and that He **appeared** to many.* The *resurr* is *essential* to the Gospel.
- b. *Second*, the resurrection proves God has *accepted* Jesus' *payment* in your *place*. Which *then* means that Jesus has *conquered* the power of *sin*. We just examined that in **1 Cor 15:17f**.
- c. *Third*, the resurrection *certifies* that Jesus is God's Son. **Rm.1:4** – *Christ Jesus...was declared the Son of God w/ power **by the resurrection from the dead**.* → Because Jesus is God's Son, He was *qualified* to die for *sinners*.
- d. *Fourth*, we also saw (**1 Cor 15:22**) that Christ's *resurrection* assures *your future resurrection*. Jesus has *conquered* the power of *death*. When a Christian dies, his *spirit* lives w/Christ forever, & his body will someday be *raised* & *glorified*, just like the Lord's.
- e. *Fifth*, the risen Savior lives to *keep you*, & to *pray* for you. **Hb 7:25** – *[Therefore He is able also to **save forever** those who draw near to God thru Him, since He **always lives** to make intercession for them.]*
2X

3. *Jesus is alive!* You sit *there*. He is seated **there** (right now) – at the *right hand* of His Father.

- a. This is *non-negotiable*. You **must believe** that Jesus *died* to pay for your *sins* & you **must** also believe God *raised* Him from the grave.
- b. If the resurrection *isn't* true, you have *no proof* that God has *accepted* the death of Jesus *in your place*, for your *sins*. You have no *verification* of the promise of *eternal life*.

But, ... I stand before you this day, declaring to all men & women, young & old, Christ has been raised! ☺

Which means you have to make a choice ...

1. It's the most *critical*, life-changing *choice* you will ever be confronted with. More important than what you do after *graduation*...than how you'll be *employed*...where you'll *live*...even more important who you will ***marry!***
 - a. Listen while Jesus spells out your choice for you (Jn 3:36): [*“He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; **but** he who **does not obey** the Son will not see life, but the **wrath** of God abides on him.”*] **2X**
 - i. Do you **understand** your *choice*...? To *believe* in Christ, or to *disobey* (spurn, refuse, or simply to *ignore*) His offer.
 - ii. Do you **understand** what's at stake: *eternal life* or *eternal wrath!*
 - b. ***Why*** do people *refuse*? (Why would ***you*** refuse Christ!?!))
 - i. **Rich Young Ruler?** Excited! Stops Jesus. *“Good teacher, what must I **do** to inherit eternal life?”* Commandments? *“All these things I have kept...”* One thing you lack, go & *sell all*; come & *follow Me*. He went away sorrowing, for he ***possessed***... He *tripped* on the **10th** com.; he didn't want *give up* what he had. Is there something *you* don't want to *give up*...?
 - ii. Perhaps you *refuse* because you don't really ***understand*** the *seriousness* of the Gospel (**e.g.** you don't see how *sinful* God says you are). Or, maybe you just ***won't*** *believe* the Gospel.
 - iii. Maybe you're too *proud* to admit your sin; maybe too *proud* to *turn* from your old ways & *follow* Him. *“What would my friends/family say...?”*
 - iv. Maybe you simply love your *sin!* Maybe you won't *abandon* your *false gods* (success, relationship, *pleasure*).
 - v. If you are about to *reject* Jesus, can I give you some *advice*? ***Beg God for faith...beg Him for a repenting heart.***

2. Here's what *I've* been praying, young friend – that you *want* to trust Christ!
- a. The NT tells a story about *Paul & Silas* being beaten & thrown in *jail* for preaching Christ in *Philippi*. They spent the night *praying & singing*, & at midnight an enormous *earthquake* rocked the *jail* & freed all the *prisoners*. The terrified *jailer* rushes in & cries out to Paul & Silas, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*” **2x**
 - b. Are you ready for the *answer*? ... It doesn't have a thing to do w/*baptism* or *good works* or *self-reform* or *church membership*! It has everything to do w/ *faith*! Paul & Silas said, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus**, & you will be saved...” → (*spoke the word of the Lord to him*)
 - c. *That's it*: if you want to be *delivered from God's wrath* & gain *eternal life*, you need to **believe** the Bible's story about *Jesus* (**6 truths**). **Turn w/ me to Rm 10:9-10.**
 - i. Look at **v.9** *carefully*. Its promise is *simple*, but *profound*. *Salvation* is granted to the young *man or woman* who...
 1. **Confesses Jesus as Lord**. **Two** huge ideas in these **four** small words: a.) **Confess**... a *sincere public agreement* that Jesus is **Lord**. b.) Jesus is **Lord**. You are agreeing to *follow Him as Master & Savior* for the rest of your life.
 2. **Believe in your heart** God raised Him from the dead. The Bible's concept of *the heart* is much *stronger* than ours; it means your *mind & emotions & will* – **all** that you *are* on the *inside*. Which tells you that *real faith* is **way more** than a *mere mental nod* to a *Sunday School story* or a *list of Bible facts*!
 3. *Faith* says that Jesus is *exactly* who the Bible says He is, and that you will *turn & follow* Him as *faithfully* as you can, from *now on*.
 - ii. The Bible goes on to explain (**10**) that *believing w/ all* that you are (*heart*), and agreeing to *follow* Jesus as your *Lord*, will bring your *salvation* – Christ will *rescue* you from your *sins*!

- iii. But I now need, again, to be very *clear* that Jesus taught a very *strong* definition of *faith*. Turn w/me to **Mk 8:34-35**.
1. First, I want to point out that when it comes to *responding* to Jesus, the Bible joins **two related truths**: *faith & repentance*. **Both** *trust & turning* are in Jesus' *call*.
 2. Here, *repentance & faith* are *blended* together; here is the *only flavor of faith* that will *save* you, beloved: *deny yourself* (Rich Young Ruler, *sell all!*), *pick up your cross* (die!), **follow Jesus**.
- d. What happens when you *turn & confess & believe*, like this? What happens when you *believe* Jesus & Jesus *saves* you?
- i. Complete *forgiveness* of all your sins; *past, present, & future!* (Because of Jesus' *payment* on the cross).
 - ii. God's *righteousness* accounted to you (also Jesus' *payment*).
 - iii. God's *Holy Spirit* comes in to live in you, forever.
 - iv. You're *born again*; receive *new life (new heart)* → *eternal life!*
 - v. *Adoption* into God's family. You are His *daughter/son*.
 - vi. *Citizenship* in Christ's kingdom. → Jesus is your *Lord... King!*
- e. "Tell me *one more time*, Craig, *what must I do to be saved?*"
- i. First, you have to **understand** & *accept* the Gospel as *true*.
 - ii. **Trust** that *Jesus' death & resurrection* are *enough* (no works added!) & that His death was *for you – for your sins*.
 - iii. **Count** the *cost*. He is *demanding* to be your lifelong *Lord*.
 - iv. **Turn** from your old life and *follow after Him*.
 - v. God isn't asking for an *event or a ritual* – *walking an aisle, praying a prescribed prayer, being baptized* (later...). Right now all He wants is your *life-changing, all that you are, repentance & faith!*

What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved! 😊

I want to leave you w/ a *promise*. Not *my* promise ☺ – *Jesus' no-fail promise!*

1. **Join me in Jn 6:37.** Jesus promises that, *whoever comes to Him will not be turned away!* No one - *never*.
2. Now re-examine the *first half* of Jesus' words. God's children *will come to Christ!* You want to be *God's child*, don' you? You need to *go to Him!*
3. And then there's the *rest...* "*the one who comes to Me I will **certainly not cast out!***" **2x If you come, He accepts you!**
4. Here is what I *ask* of almost everyone I share this promise with (*my own children*): **Read** this Gospel promise (6:37). **Grab** hold of this promise! **Pray this promise** until Christ *answers* & you **know in your heart for certain** that **you've trusted Him, you've come to Him, & He's saved you!**

...pray... faith & repentance. Father, assure them they are Yours!

Response:

Believers. You've heard the Good News again this month. Can I press on you what Paul pressed on the Corinthians: ***Test yourself to see if you are in the faith - examine yourself!*** I hope that Christ will *assure* you that *you are His!*

Pray for those around you who need Christ. Ask them where they are with all this!

W/o Christ? You are making a choice *right now!* To *refuse to choose* is to *make a choice* – and you aren't *guaranteed another opportunity*. **Don't delay!** *Believe in the Lord Jesus. Take Jesus' promises to God & beg to be saved. He will answer.*

Can I help? Let's talk about *faith*. Come *forward* to talk. *Call me. Drop me a text.* You've been on **my list** – I want to *help!*