

# Scripture Readings and Sermon

*April 17, 2022 by Rev. Mark Brechin*

## **Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:19-26**

At the time of Jesus, there were a number of wise rabbis some of whose teachings were very close to Jesus. There are also stories of miracle workers and healers. If we follow Jesus just because of his wise teaching or miracles, Paul says that we are most to be pitied. Even Jesus' suffering and death on the cross in which he forgave his captors was simply a noble death if not for the resurrection. The resurrection, for Paul, changes everything. The resurrection by God validates all of Jesus' teachings and reveals him to be both the Son of Man and the Son of God. Death, which was the consequence of being expelled from Eden because of the sin of disobedience, has been overcome by the resurrection of Jesus. Adam's disobedience has been erased by Jesus' obedience. One man brought death and the other offers life. The resurrection not only means that Jesus is alive but that all who believe are given new life. Christ is Risen and so are we!

1 Corinthians 15:22 "for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ."

What is systemic evil?

Have you ever looked back on your past and say, "We didn't know better"?

What systems seem evil today that in the past were just accepted?

What if every man made system is at its root evil because of sin?

If everything is inherently broken, how can anything produce wholeness?

What if Christ offers an option of wholeness in a broken world?

Could this be what is meant by the old Adam and the new Christ?

## **Commentary on Luke 24:1-12**

The story of resurrection morning vary between the four gospels. Luke and Mark make it clear that, while the Pharisees in Matthew may have expected some "resurrection hoax" and stationed guards, the women arrived at the tomb with spices expecting to find Jesus. While in John the women saw the empty tomb and ran back to the disciples, in the other gospels the women went into the tomb and found someone. In Matthew, they encountered the angels and in Mark they found a "young man" which some have said was Jesus. In Luke, there were two men, like the two witnesses at the transfiguration, who told them that Jesus was raised as he promised. Luke, however, omits the message to go to Galilee that is in Matthew, Mark, and is portrayed in John. In Matthew and John, Jesus is encountered by the women. For Luke, however, Jesus is walking down the road to Emmaus. Like John, Luke has Peter running to investigate the tomb not because the women were afraid but because they did not believe them. While the details may vary, the overall message of the gospels is the same - Jesus Is Risen!

Luke 24:5 "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."

Why do we keep doing the same thing and expect different results?

Have you seen someone figuratively keep hitting their head against a wall?

How did they react when you tried to point out the futility of their actions?

If people are desperate for hope, why would they go to a place that only judges?

If people are looking for a new path, why would they go to a place that guards the old ways?

If people are looking for new life, why would they go someplace that only talks about death?

Why do we expect people to bring life into an institution that focuses on the dead?

## **Commentary on Acts 10:34-43**

The Resurrection is at the center of every sermon preached in the Book of Acts. This sermon by Peter, unlike the one given after Pentecost, is directed to a non-Jewish audience. After Peter receives his lesson from God about the nature of "uncleanliness" on a rooftop, he is called to go to Caesarea to baptize Cornelius. Cornelius tells Peter of his vision from God and it is in this context that Peter proclaims that "I perceive that God shows no partiality." This context also explains why Peter chose to present the crucifixion in a certain light. Peter talks of Jesus preaching against the oppression of "the devil" and not the occupying force of Rome. It is the "Jews" and those "in Jerusalem" that killed Jesus by "hanging on a tree" and not the Roman authorities who crucified Jesus. While the Jewish tradition focuses on the priesthood of Jesus, Peter speaks to the Gentile of Jesus as the "Judge of the living and the dead". With this statement, Jesus is no longer simply considered a "Jewish Messiah" but the Savior of all humanity. At this point in the Book of Acts, the congregation of believers or "church" in Greek grows beyond a Jewish sect and becomes a global religion or "catholic" which in Latin means universal.

Acts 10:42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.

What does it mean that Jesus is the one appointed as judge?

Has Jesus given us any hint as to how his judgment will be based?

Is it based on our own righteousness and perfection?

Is it based on how well we follow a set of rules and traditions?

Or is it based on the health of our relationship with God and with each other?

Can anyone who doesn't see the heart judge the health of someone's relationships?

### **Reflection on 1 Corinthians 15:19-26, Luke 24:1-12, Acts 10:34-43**

#### **Sermon "Our LIVING Lord"**

He is not here, but has risen. These are the words spoken by the two men at Jesus' tomb. Luke's resurrection story goes on to say that Jesus was to be found on the road which went to Emmaus. Jesus was not hanging around in the graveyard for as the two men said to the women, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Jesus did not come to bring death but life and life abundantly (John 10:10). The wages of sin is death but "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) While it is important to "Go to Dark Gethsemane" and remember "The Old Rugged Cross", Jesus "has died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God." (Romans 6:10) As the Book of Hebrews explains, "Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins." (Hebrews 10:12)

If Christ has died once for all time, then why do we keep looking for Jesus in the graveyard or on a cross? If "we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied" says Paul to the Corinthians. But we do more than hope in Christ, we live in Christ for Christ is alive today! He is not just some character in history but is our living Savior today. Death is not the end but only the beginning of the story of Christ. Peter experience this story when Jesus continued to draw people like the Roman soldier who Peter baptized. As a result, Peter said "I truly understand that God shows no partiality". Peter doesn't witness to the cross but he witnesses to the resurrection which overcomes even death on a cross. Jesus died for us so that we might live for him. While others may realize that because of our mortality that in life we are in the midst of death, because of the resurrection we know that even in the midst of death we are in life! May you experience new life and in Christ find the abundant life God has planned for you!