

# The Joy House

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Date: 04 September 2016

Preacher: The Venerable Daniel Gifford

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, as I said to the children, this reading today is all about solidness. It is about touching and seeing and feeling Jesus and who he is and hearing him speak as well.
- The gospel, according to the Bible, according to John who was there, is that that which we have seen and touched, we've heard, this is what we proclaim concerning the word of life.
- So Luke's account is down to earth. It is solidness. And you can see, if you turn to verse 42 in that Bible reading that we heard today, that even after touching and seeing the reality of Jesus, there is still doubt.
- There is still uncertainty. And that's been the case for every generation since Jesus, that that has afflicted us as human beings. They disbelieved for joy.
- Even though they knew it was very, very good, they could not believe that Jesus rose in power. But to show that it wasn't wishful thinking or a spirit, as I told the children, he says, well, you've got something to eat.
- [ 1 : 0 5 ] And of course, Jesus receives this piece of broiled fish, very clear detail, and he takes and he eats it in front of them.
- And as Harry Robinson once said, ever since then, theologians have been having indigestion. And that's true. It is something that shakes us up, that we are confronted with.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ, literally, bodily, everything that has to do with humanity, coming to life forever. And the solidness that Luke is talking about, this eyewitness of seeing the living Jesus, is deeply important.
- We might be asking, why does that affect us today in my life? Well, very simply, Jesus gives three things. Actually more, but I only have time for three.
- He tells us why this changes everything. And the first thing he says in verse 44 is that it means that Jesus is the key to understanding everything about the Bible.
- [ 2 : 1 4 ] The whole Bible is about him. Look at verse 44. These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in Moses, the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, must be fulfilled.
- In other words, all the promises of God in the Bible to save, to restore his people, and in fact, all of creation is fulfilled when Jesus walked in that room, risen from the dead.
- And I'll give you an example of this. God's great covenant with Abraham was that the world would be blessed by a particular people. Jesus represented them perfectly.
- And so what Jesus does in the most awesome way is to bless the fallen world in the ultimate way. When we look at Jesus' risen body with the scars on his hands and on his feet, we are actually seeing the death of death, the undoing of all evil that has been or ever will be committed in this world.
- And we see the beautiful future of our bodies and all of creation. We are looking at Jesus. When we are looking at him, we are seeing God's rescue plan unfolded in front of us.
- [ 3 : 3 6 ] Because the heart of all of this that has happened, that we are seeing in Jesus, is that he's born to be the perfect sacrifice who takes upon himself the sin and evil of the world.

He dies in our place so that we have peace with God by the forgiveness of sins in the midst of a very broken world, and that the risen Lord Jesus brings those who trust him into the very life of God.

And this is the thing that's sometimes hard to believe for people, that God blesses the world this way in the midst of the brokenness that surrounds us. But what Jesus does is he brings people to know his heavenly father forever, and this is true joy.

So our mission, our work here at St. John's, is defined by that resurrection. It is to work with God to bring others into the eternal life that Jesus has accomplished.

So God's plan, revealed throughout all the Bible, is very simply to restore the friendship of people with God that was lost in the Garden of Eden.

[ 4 : 46 ] So it is fulfilled in Jesus. There's no greater blessing than this. I love verse 45. If you look at that, he says, Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

And I think this is the great gift of God for us today through the resurrection, that when you pray, Jesus opens up God's word to you. And he does it. He gives you true understanding of God's word, because it's about Jesus.

He brings you to know him, to love his promises, to guide you into his ways, and to show you how to obey and worship him. There is a great joy in knowing God.

It only happens because God opens up his word by the power of the resurrection. And I hope that every time you read the Bible, you pray, Jesus, help me to understand the Scriptures as you taught and opened the hearts of those first disciples.

Now, a second meaning of the resurrection for us is that God is now powerfully proclaiming something that brings people into friendship with God.

[ 5 : 53 ] Look at this. Look at verse 46. Thus it is written that Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, meaning every ethnic group in the world, beginning from Jerusalem.

So you see, the resurrection means that God makes it possible for you, for people to turn to him for forgiveness. And so when you and I and anybody in the world hear that Jesus died for the forgiveness of our sins, and that he destroys its power by rising as the ruler of everything, there is a change that takes place.

People are actually brought into the very life of God in that way. And it is the proclamation of God's Word that does it. And proclamation isn't just about teaching or preaching.

That is very important. But it's important to know that you and I, having conversations about Jesus, the risen Jesus, giving halting answers to questions about him, humbly and boldly sharing our testimony, as simple as it might be, using our gifts and our personality as God gives us the power to, God brings people into the very life of God.

This is the great mission of our church and every church in the world, that the power of the resurrection is brought into our world by proclaiming it, proclaiming the forgiveness of sins and repentance.

[ 7 : 33 ] Now a final meaning of the resurrection, and boys and girls, we have about two minutes here, and then we're going to show what you're doing. A final meaning of the resurrection is very simply that Jesus sends his Holy Spirit.

Now this is power. This is reality. Look at verse 48. Jesus says, You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending you the promise of my Father upon you, the Holy Spirit, but stay in the city until you are clothed with power.

What is that power for? The power that the Holy Spirit brings to us. Well, verse 48 says, it is the power to be a witness for Jesus, to be open about what you have seen and heard and touched about Jesus through his word.

That's why the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They have received the gift of the risen Jesus living in their life, knowing his power at work in them.

And this is the gift for us today, that as we leave this passage, we need to understand that we cannot see the Holy Spirit, but his work is unmistakable.

[ 8 : 47 ] It's through him that you have spiritual life, in which you know God's law, and that he is, you are his child forever. By the Holy Spirit's power, he changes your heart and your mind, so that you know and love the risen Jesus and want to obey him.

That is what change and softens our heart. The reality of the resurrection is confirmed every day. When you serve him, when you see change in people from the inside out.

And so you see it in the lives of the friends of Jesus as well, because just 50 days later, you see these frightened people who are so uncertain in that room today, 50 days later, boldly witnessing to Jesus Christ and who he is in the face of great danger, going from frightened people to people who live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke says it's the reality of the resurrection and the power of the Holy Spirit that changed them. And he continues to work in them for their whole life, according to the next book, the book of Acts.

And so friends, this is the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives to you and to me today by the power of the resurrection. And as we begin a new term, this is the Holy Spirit that is at work in us so that you may proclaim in a variety of different ways, really proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

[ 10 : 23 ] It is by that proclamation that the world will be blessed, that the resurrection life of Jesus Christ himself, risen now from the dead, will be brought to bear in this dark world to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Amen.