Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

***One Week After the Resurrection***

***We are Gifted Living Witnesses***

*April 19th*, 2020 A.D.

The Year of Our Lord

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

From the day of the Resurrection, seven days have gone by since the Lord had risen. The world is realizing that the crucifixion of the Galilean troublemaker did not take. The Jewish and Roman leadership scrambled to find the body of Jesus. From their perspective, the worst outcome was unfolding before them. The reality of a resurrected man who had claimed to be the long-anticipated Messiah was coming true. They made-up stories that soldiers had fallen asleep or had been bribed (Matthew 28). This is the classic account that fallen man cannot stop God’s eternal plan and make excuses about the facts.

To this day, unfounded stories persist that Jesus survived the Cross or that someone else, who looked like Jesus, was substituted for Him. Even suggestions that the followers of Jesus went to the wrong tomb that had not been used and found it empty. The world has read the accounts of Jesus escaping or surviving the Cross to ‘run off’ with a woman named Mary thus producing several children. All of these are simple attempts by the enemies of God to distract the world from the reality of the truth.

The truth is God came in the flesh and lived with us for thirty-three and half years witnessing and teaching about His kingdom. Then He willingly went to the Cross to pay the price for the sins of the world. God then resurrected Himself to continue His ministry of teaching and spiritual empowerment.

**Prideful man executed the Cross**, but their plans backfired when the tomb was found empty. The Jewish leaders sent Jesus to the Cross to be crucified by the Romans. They manipulated the system to achieve their desires. When Pilate asked them what they wanted to do with the man called Christ, they all responded “Crucify Him” (Matthew 27:15ff). This call was led by the Chief Priest and Elders of the Temple. They pressed Pilate to send Jesus to the Cross. The Scripture details that Pilate knew it was because of “envy” they handed Jesus over to him. This was also at the time of the “Feast of the Governor” which afforded the people a custom to release a prisoner. This is when the notorious criminal Barabbas was released in exchange for Jesus.

And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!" (Matthew 27:23)

The Jewish leadership intended to end the challenge to their rule by crucifying Jesus. But their plot literally blew-up in their face. Within their life-time they rebelled against the Romans who suppressed their rebellion, destroying Jerusalem and dismantling the Temple. All of this took place by 70 A.D. Jesus prophesied that not one stone would be left of the Temple.

**Hearing First**

Think about the person who has just heard for the first time what happened to God when He reached-out to us and decided to become one of us in order to save us from ourselves, from sin and death. Some surrender to God and become Believers. However, to others, this account of God’s great love confounds the world. Still, we persist with our witness, because we know the truth. We are called by God and have His desire at work in us to witness the Gospel.

Several years ago, we were handing-out free bottles of water at the antique show here in Round Top. Along with the free bottled water, we gave a brochure witnessing that Jesus gives us water; if we will drink it then we will never thirst again.

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." (John 4:13-14)

One woman came by and asked why we were giving away free water. I gave her the brochure, and she looked confused. She walked away murmuring that it did not make any sense to give away free water.

God’s great love is not going to let our lives that He created go without a redemptive offering from Him. We are created in God’s image to have a relationship with Him. Being created in God’s image does not mean that we physically look like God (Genesis 1:26,27). God would be limited if He were stuck in our bodies. He created us to have the ability to have His Spirit indwell our hearts and minds. Above all else, we are spiritual beings. This is the eternal power that sustains us now, “Spiritual.” This gives us the ability to live victoriously now and obtain eternal life.

 It is said that we take nothing with us when we die. However, Believers transcend to Heaven with God’s love imbedded in their spiritual hearts. God’s love stays with us (Romans 8:37-39). Again, remember that God is love and God’s love stays with us even though we physically die. We are created in God’s image of love. Think about what God has done based upon who He is. God is love, so it is reasonable that He created us to be love also. However, God desires for us to freely choose His love.

**Romans 8:37-39**

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**What Happened During Jesus’ Resurrection Ministry?**

Jesus accomplished many things after He walked from the tomb. We read the account of the two men on the road to Emmaus. Jesus appears to the women and the disciples. During Jesus’ “Resurrection Ministry”, He breathed His Spirit into the disciples (John 20:19ff) spiritually empowering them. Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." We, like the disciples, receive God’s peace. This empowers us with the ability to overcome sin and death. This is the second time in history that God demonstrated His power to breathe life both physical and spiritual. The first time was when He breathed into Adam to give him life (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4). God’s Spirit is life and love. God is love, and when He breathes His Spirit into us, we receive His Spirit of love and life. God created us to walk in life and love, not death. Again, this is why we are created in His image.

Always remember that the power to create life is the same power to resurrect life. This is God at work. Therefore, life in this creation is a miracle just like the Resurrection. Scientists cannot explain the origins of life or the Resurrection of Jesus.

 God finds a way in His creation to communicate to people the truth about His intent for their lives (Romans 1:18 and following). Referring back to the woman at the fair to whom we gave the water, through offering a simple bottle of water, God delivered His Gospel Message.

**Where Are We Going?**

**Is There an Alternative?**

**Three statements of Love.**

 The short answer is “Heaven.” God’s sovereign authority is the final determinant. Satan could not stop the Incarnation or the Cross. Satan was given a free-will opportunity to stop God in the flesh as chronicled in Matthew 4 in the “Test in the Wilderness.” What we see in that encounter (Test) is that Satan hasn’t any power to control the occurrence of events God has planned, including the end-time events. Satan has been allowed a free-will role, presence and a voice (Genesis 3, Job 1, Matthew 4). It is up to us to listen or not.

**1.** God loved us first (1 John 4:19). He has chosen to give us the choice to love Him back. The fact that there is a choice, the decision must be weighed over an alternative. We see this with Adam and Eve. By doing this, He allows Satan to exist with us for now. There will be an eternal separation in the future (Revelation 20). I find it freeing to know that God will not make us love Him. We have alternatives. No one can say that God is the only way to go. There are other choices. The Cross demonstrates the other choices.

**2.** We cannot say enough that God is Love (1 John 4:8) and love is a choice. Love is a response. God created us to experience love. For us to experience love, we must choose through and over what is not love. We know that Adam and Eve failed the test. God’s incarnation demonstrated His mastery over love’s opposite, which is unforgiveness, pride, bitterness, and selfishness, to name a few.

**3.** We can try, but we are pressed to imagine a world without the choice for love. Would anyone desire to live in this life and never experience love? The absence of love means that there wouldn’t be any life. God’s love (John 3:16) provides for us the possibility to have life and life eternal.

**1 Corinthians 15:19-22**

19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

**1 Corinthians 15:45-47**

45 So, also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

The Cross points to a future time when there will be an eternal separation between love and the absence of love. In God’s unveiling to John, Satan is separated forever from God’s people and His Heaven. God, as Jesus, judges all people at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:7-15). After these events, God’s kingdom is the eternal place of love established for Believers.

**Jesus Christ, the son of David**

In His ‘forever’ Providence, God spoke through King David over 900 years before He incarnated himself. What Satan and the fallen world believed they had stopped at the Cross continues. We are a part of God ushering in His kingdom. We are living witnesses. We are the eternal living witnesses. You cannot remove God’s love (John 10:29) from the heart of a person. In fact, man cannot place God in a person’s heart either. Many try, but it is God’s Holy Spirit that convicts and indwells hearts.

King David’s heart was occupied by God. God worked through and spoke through David. Like us, even though David sinned, he sought forgiveness (Psalm 51). This seeking forgiveness is the mark of a person who is in right standing with God. These words in the Psalms speak to us in our time of need.

**Psalm. 22:9** But Thou, O LORD, be not far off;

O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance

God has planned that the 23rd Psalm come after the 22nd Psalm. The message of the Cross continues as it does in our lives. We are living witnesses to Gods’ songs.

**Psalm 23:1** *A Psalm of David*.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside quiet waters.

 3 He restores my soul;

He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;

Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

 5 Thou dost prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

 Thou hast anointed my head with oil;

 My cup overflows.

 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me

all the days of my life,

 And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

 There are numerous passages of Scripture that identify Jesus as the Messianic “Son of David” who God promised would come and rule forever.

**Matthew 1:1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

 **Luke 1:32-33** 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

**Isaiah 9:7** There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

**Matthew 22:41-46** 41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question,

 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "*The son* of David."

 43 He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying,

 44 'The Lord said to my LORD, "Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet "'? [Psalm 110:1]

 45 "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" 46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

**Jesus taught that there is a resurrection for all Believers:**

**Luke 20:33-40.**

33 "In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

 34 And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,

 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage;

 36 for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

 37 "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the *passage about the burning* bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

 38 "Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him."

 39 And some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well."

 40 For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.

**Additional teachings of Jesus and the Resurrection:**

**Luke 24:46** and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day;

**John 2:22** When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

**Mark 9:10** And they seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead might mean.

**Luke 24:26** "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

**Psalm 16:10** For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.

**Matthew 16:21** From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

**Matthew 16:22** And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."

**Mark 9:9** And as they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man should rise from the dead.

**Mark 9:31** For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later." 32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him. **See also** **Luke 9:45, Luke 18:34**

 Resurrection Appearances in all four Gospels

Luke Appearance:

**Luke 24** Resurrection and first appearance “The Road to Emmaus” and then the Ascension

 **(Only place in Gospels found and in Acts 1:9-11)**

 **9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.**

 **10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.**

 **11 They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."**

John Appearance:

**John 20:1-18** Empty Tomb witnessed by the disciples and the women.

**John 20:19-29** The first day of the week, after the crucifixion, Jesus appears in house to Apostles, breaths His Holy Spirit on them and commissions them to convict the world of sin. Then for those who surrender, they are to tell them that they are released from sin and death.

Eight days later (John 20:26), Jesus comes to the Apostles and this time addresses Thomas who doubted because he was not at the first or second appearance.

**John 21** Appearance at Galilee.

Jesus directs them to cast their empty nets, and they caught 153 fish.

This is the third appearance (John 21:14).

Jesus restores Peter (John 21:15-17).

John closes with 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

Matthew Appearances.

Chapter 28 ~ An angel of the Lord rolled away the stone and sat upon it. This angel had an appearance like lightning and his garment was as white as snow, and the guards shook with fear. The angel tells the two women, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary (*mother of the apostle James “The Less” and Salome: Mark 16:1*) to go and tell the disciples of the empty tomb and that Jesus had risen. The Angel directs the women that Jesus can be found in Galilee. As the women left, Jesus met them and told them not to be afraid, and they took hold of His feet to worship Him. Jesus told them to tell the brethren to go to Galilee, and He would meet them there.

 After this appearance, the guards, fearful of the angel, told the chief priest all that had happened for a large sum of money. They were to say that Jesus’ disciples came by night and stole Jesus’ body. How convenient of a story.

**Second appearance at Galilee. Jesus gives the Great Commission.**

**Matthew 28:18-20**

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mark Appearances. Mark 16 The women find the empty tomb with an angel who looked like a young man in a white robe who tells the women that Jesus has risen. He also directed them to Galilee and to tell the Disciples.

**What is the overall picture we can attain from the four Gospel accounts and the book of Acts? Here are a few details.**

1. The tomb was found first by women to be empty.
2. After the women, the tomb was found by the disciples to be empty, and they saw His wrappings. They still struggled to remember what Jesus had said about being raised from the dead.  9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. (John 20:9).
3. It was an angel of the Lord who rolled away the stone.
4. Guards saw the angel and shook with fear.
5. The tomb was found to be empty on the first day of the week.
6. There was a Messenger (Angel) at the tomb to give the women a message to meet Jesus at Galilee, that Jesus had risen.
7. The women went to tell the disciples.
8. Jesus met the women as they were on their way to tell the disciples.
9. Jesus talks to the women about His ascension. 17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" (John 20:17)
10. Jesus directs the women to tell the disciples to meet Him at Galilee.
11. Jesus shows the disciples His hands and feet as evidence it is He. 20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord (John 20:20).
12. Jesus performs miracles like redirecting the casting of the net.
13. Jesus restores Peter.
14. Jesus confronts the doubter, Thomas.
15. Jesus walks and visits with two men as they travel and sits

to eat with them.

1. Jesus commissions the disciples. This gives them Holy Spirit

authority (breathes on them) by which people are convicted of sin and are presented with the choice to surrender to God’s Holy Spirit and be loosed from sin and death.

1. Jesus did things that were not recorded (written).
2. The authorities paid the soldiers to say that the disciples

stole the body from the tomb.

1. Jesus tells the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy

Spirit to clothe them with power from on high

(Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

1. Jesus Ascends to Heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1).

**Acts 1:1-9**

**1** The first account I composed, Theophilus,

 about all that Jesus began to do and teach,

 2 until the day when He was taken up,

after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles

whom He had chosen.

 3 To these He also presented Himself alive,

after His suffering, by many convincing proofs,

appearing to them over *a period of* forty days,

and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

 4 And gathering them together,

He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem,

but to wait for what the Father had promised,

"Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me;

 5 for John baptized with water**,**

 but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying,

 "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

 7 He said to them,

"It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;

and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem,

and in all Judea and Samaria,

and even to the remotest part of the earth."

9 And after He had said these things,

**He was lifted up while they were looking on,**

 **and a cloud received Him out of their sight.**

 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

 11 They also said,

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven,

will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

 **Therefore, what did all this produce**? The incarnation of God as Jesus Christ, the teaching ministry of God, the arrest, trial, wrongful conviction, torture, the Cross, the death, the burial, the three days in the tomb, the Resurrection, the eyewitness of the empty tomb, the lies of the legal authorities, the Resurrection appearance, the commission of the disciples . . . **what did this produce**? An eternal witness through all Believers.

 God speaks eternal truths through His servant Paul in Romans 3:21-26:

21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

 26 for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

 In addition, the incarnation produces what God had always intended for man; for God to operate, to function inside his heart as in Deuteronomy 30:6, Ezekiel 36. This “indwelling, circumcision of the heart” changes a person forever. When and where was the first evidence of this taking place after the Ascension? At Pentecost. The Disciples where given supernatural powers.

 The Lord had ascended and wasn’t physically present anymore. Therefore, God empowered them to forward His redemptive plan with His Spirit inside of them. Jesus demonstrated this empowerment by breathing His Spirit into them (John 20:19ff). We, too, are capable of receiving the same Holy Spirit powers that the disciples received at Pentecost. We will not all be given the same gift, but, we, as Believers, are designed to be empowered. Paul writes of this in 1 Corinthians 12.

1 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

 . . . . .

 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

 6 And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*.

 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Gifts of the Spirit Fruits of the Spirit Galatians 5:22

1) Words of Wisdom Love

2) Words of Knowledge Joy

3) Faith Peace

4) Gifts of Healing Patience

5) Working of Miracles Kindness

6) Prophecy Goodness

7) Discerning of Spirits Faithfulness

8)  different kinds of Tongues Gentleness

9) Interpretation of different Tongues Self-control

**1 Corinthians 12:31** But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way

**1 Corinthians 14:1** Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. AMEN