**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

The Resurrection Effect – The Love of God

 ***Six Weeks After “The” Resurrection***

***42 Days since the Resurrection***

***40 Days Resurrection Ministry***

***2 Days After the Ascension***

***8 Days to Pentecost***

***1987 years ago***

*May 24th*, 2020 A.D.

The Year of Our Lord

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

**Explain the Cross**

I believe that we Believers need to be able to explain the Cross. Explain “Christianity.” The word “Christianity” has been applied to many cultural and political movements throughout history to the point of saturation into a “whatever you want the word to mean.” Like the well-known phrase from the cultural revolution of the 1960’s, “If it feels good, do it.” So, whatever you want “Christianity” to be, you can be that definition!

Let’s start with ‘**Why the Cross**?’ Why did God make the creation with the need for a Messiah and the Cross?

**The Trophy of Love**

 If God is so caring about people, then why didn’t He make the world without pain or bad things happening, or illness or no one ever losing? You know, we all get a **trophy** and live right here forever.

The simple truth about a **trophy** is that a **trophy** would not exist **unless someone wins**. Win over what? This means someone or something had to lose. There had to have been a challenge or struggle. There is only one gold medal in the Olympics. The opposite of winning is losing. When we apply the reality of a winning **trophy** to God’s plan of love, we see that there has to be an opposite of love for there to be love. To experience love is opposed to experiencing hate. Love and hate do not exist alone. They both have to be in existence for the other to work.

Adam and Eve were bebopping along without a want in the world until the serpent presented them with an alternative. (There was a Country Western song years ago about a person driving their new Cadillac who rear-ended a semi-truck, because they were rubber-necking a Rolls Royce.)

 Hey, Adam and Eve! You have everything to support life ‘free of charge’. However, want to know what God knows. . . want to be like God? They were perfectly happy when the alternative came along. Then they had to choose between humility to God and their selfish interest. They rubber-necked pride and selfishness. We know the outcome. They allowed their pride to choose selfishness over Gods’ loving provisions which were more than adequate for life. Love does not seek its own (1 Corinthians 13:5).

We know that God had a redemption plan in place from the beginning of the creation. God knew the Fall would happen. God did not want the Fall to happen. He allowed it to happen. Why?

God wants us to be able to freely choose Him. Love is a choice! Believers know that 1 Corinthians 13 is the definition of love. This chapter is the best definition of God. *Love endures all things and never fails*. This is God (Corinthians 13:7,8). People fail to endure. God created the creation with freedom to choose love/Him. We can choose love or hate to be at work in us. When we humbly surrender to God, His love becomes an internal action of our heart processed by our mind. Love has to be chosen to be real. If we humble ourselves to God then His love can work in us. Love does not exist in a vacuum. Love functions in adversary. Love has to be chosen through opposition, challenge and difficult circumstances. Through love’s counterpart, which is pride, hate and unforgiveness, we are afforded the opportunity to choose love.

 From observing my experiences in life, love has components of compassion, empathy, forgiveness, humility, and selflessness. God allows us to choose to be committed to love. Love is a commitment to be pursued **through** all the things with which this fallen environment confronts us. Love is “The” value in life that is intended to bind all relationships together. We observe there are three kinds of love in the New Testament - **Philia**: Brotherly; **Eros**: sensual/romantic; and **Agape**: God’s love for us. With God’s Holy Spirit indwelling us, all our relationships use these forms of love.

Love is the power that binds our relationships together. At the same time, a life without love is a life that hasn’t any relationships. A life that is isolated is a death sentence. People cannot live a sane life without love. The world’s prisons are full of people who are not loved. The lack of a love-relationship from parents is a sentence to destructive behavior.

**Love From the Beginning**

 Repeating 1 John 4:8 “God is love.” Since, God is love, love was present from the beginning of the creation. Love is extended to us from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

 From reading Genesis 1-3, we receive the witness of the plurality of God unified in the beginning forming the creation. Both the Old and New Testament witness this truth. (Genesis 1, John 1)

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God (Hebrew: El-o-heem/Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.

‎ WTTבְּרֵאשִׁ֖ית בָּרָ֣א אֱלֹהִ֑ים אֵ֥ת הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וְאֵ֥ת הָאָֽרֶץ׃ (Gen. 1:1 WTT)

אֱלֹהִים Elohiym noun common masculine plural absolute

 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God (plural) was moving over the surface of the waters.

 3 Then God (plural) said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

 **Genesis 1 is directly linked to John 1.**

 **John 1:1-5, 14**

 In the beginning was the Word, (Greek: logos, singular form)

and the Word was **with** God,

and the Word **was** God.

 2 He was in the beginning with God.

 3 All things came into being through Him,

and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

. . . . .

**John 1:10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

. . . . .

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,

and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father,

full of grace and truth.

 We have highlighted these passages of Scripture in the past. Again, we need to apply them today to the witness of God. In Genesis 1, the word for God is in the **plural** form (Hebrew El-o-heem/Elohiym). We see that the **Spirit** of God is active in verse 2, supporting the plural manifestations of God.

 The Gospel of John specifically identifies the **Word** was **with** God in the beginning, and the **Word** **was** God, highlighting the Triune God’s reality. Note the “**Word**” (Greek: **logos** in John) is in the “single form” in the Koine Greek text, the original language the New Testament was written. This identifies God as Messiah (Jesus) specifically.

The **Word (Logos)** is and was in the beginning because the **Word is God.** This is when God started to create. The **God**/**Word** created. Therefore, the **Word** and **God** are one and the same. John identifies that all things were made through the **Word,** and the **Word** was incarnated into the world and lived with us, detailed in John 1:10,14. This is important to witness that God, during the incarnation time, was Jesus Christ.

Believers need to have a steady witness, that the power and authority that created us and our world has the power to enter the world as a human being. Is it a miracle? Yes. This is something we cannot explain through the laws of known physics, no more than any scientist can explain “materialistically” the origins of life applying accepted scientific processes. Scientists have only hypothesis. What we know is that we are here, and this world exists.

The miracles of the Creation and the Incarnation witnessed in the Bible by people that were there (“eyewitnesses”) are a testimony to our Creator’s enduring love. John and Matthew are eyewitnesses who write about other eyewitnesses, particularly the women: Mary Magdalena, Mary the Mother of James and Joses, and Salome (See Mark 15). Luke writes about people who were eyewitness, namely Paul. Mark knew Peter, who wrote from his eyewitness account.

 The Incarnation, ministry life, death on the Cross, Resurrection ministry and Ascension are all a testimony of God’s love that keeps giving. Love restored Peter from turning his back on Jesus. God as Jesus extended His love to the apostles. Love overcame fear. God’s love drove the apostles to respond to the empty tomb. Love catapulted them to meet Jesus at Galilee. The love of God held them together during the whole resurrection time. For the love of Jesus, they waited in Jerusalem to receive additional empowerment from Jesus. This came through Jesus’ Holy Spirit He had already breathed into them (John 20:22) during the resurrection time.

**Luke 24:45-53**

45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written,

that the Christ would suffer (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22)

and rise again from the dead the third day,

 (Good things happen in Hebrew history on the 3rd day.

Ex: Hosea 6:1-2; 2 Kings 20:5; Genesis 42:18)

 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins

would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations,

beginning from Jerusalem. (Not Rome)

 48 "You are witnesses of these things.

 49 "And behold,

I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you;

but you are to stay in the city

until you are clothed with power from on high."

50 And He led them out as far as Bethany,

and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

51 While He was blessing them,

He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

 52 And they, after worshiping Him,

returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

53 and were continually in the temple praising God.

**Acts 1:1-15**

1 The first account I composed,

 Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,

 (We see that Luke is addressing the same person he identified in his first letter, known as the Gospel of Luke.)

 2 until the day when He was taken up to heaven,

after He had by the Holy Spirit

 given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.

(It is important to see that Jesus in His resurrected form was the Holy Spirit giving orders to the apostles.)

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 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 will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

not many days from now."

 6 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 will 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. (Mark 16)

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."

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

[2000 steps: by Jewish law, the distance allowed to walk on the Sabbath.]

13 When they had entered the city,

they went up to the **upper room** where they were staying;

that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

 15 At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, . . .

 Peter reports what happened to Judas.

The Apostles replace Judas with Matthias.

What can we learn from this account in Luke and Acts? Specifically, from the time during the Resurrection ministry of God, as Jesus Christ, to forty days later at the Ascension, to the time of waiting in the upper room in Jerusalem, here are some observations that are similar.

1. **Patience** to allow the **Love of the Lord** to work in our lives.
2. If we wait for the Lord to work in us, we are more **effective**.
3. Our **witness is increased** when we seek the Lord to move **in us.**
4. We are a part of **God’s Eternal Light** that never extinguishes.
5. We are **instruments of the** **Word, present** in the first verse of the Bible.
6. We are in the **witness line** of the Apostles.
7. We allow **God’s love to work** in and through us.

AMEN