**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

**Resurrection**

 **March 31st, In the Year of Our Lord 2024**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard

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 We extend a warm welcome to everyone on this commemorative day of the Lord. Today, of all days that we come together to worship. . .we must preach the core of the Gospel Message, the Good News of God. For the Resurrection is the centerpiece of God’s glory and grace. We preach the eternal Word of God and His Message that "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:13; Joel 2:32). The man God inspired to write those words (Apostle Paul) was a man who was persecuted, prosecuted, beaten, jailed, left for dead and eventually martyred outside the city of Rome by beheading. . . all for preaching to a lost hostile world in the name of Jesus, the Resurrected Lord of Creation.

The accurate Christian biblical description to commemorate today’s worship service can be summarized in one word. . . “Resurrection”. For those of us who know the truth, we are concerned that there persists a cloak of deception produced by the fallen world to hide our Lord’s Resurrection under an Easter basket. The 17th c. British Monk (Venerable Bede,) borrowed the name from the seasonal English Spring celebration of the pagan fertility goddess “Eoster”. This Eoster celebration was at the same time of the year as the Jewish Passover which is the time of the Resurrection. Over time, many more pagan celebratory tractions were brought into the Church. For obvious reasons, the bunny rabbit was the animal symbol for Eoster the fertility goddess.

For those who have not made the connection of the Resurrection of Jesus to the Jewish Passover of the Exodus. . . there is direct symbolism to the last plague of God brought by His death angel upon Pharaoh. God instructed the Hebrews to smear the blood of a lamb over the doorpost of their homes, and the death angel spared the life of the first-born child (Exodus 12). This is the Lord’s Passover (Exodus 12:11). Therefore, by our surrendering faith to God and His Cross, which is the spilt blood of Jesus. . . God ‘passes over’ the sins of a person who has humbled themselves to the Lord. Christ is our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). We access the power of God’s forgiveness by our surrender and humbling our heart to Him. . . those who are poor in spirit. . .for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3-4)

 The secular culture is aimed at children’s hearts with the Resurrection covered by an Easter bunny. Once a child is introduced to this secularism, parents are challenged to refocus their child’s heart and mind.

 700 years before Jesus’ Resurrection, God calls to fallen humanity . . . And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. 22 "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:21-22).

 And then we read in the Gospel of John. . . "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

 For visitors this morning, you have come to a place where Christian Believers join in our common faith in Jesus, the Christ. With all the turmoil in the world, and in America, we come together on this day despite any of our life circumstances and heart-felt feelings about the wars both physical and spiritual. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Through these calamities, God calls all people to worship Him regardless of their station in life. The Church of God is the leveling place for society and culture to meet as all are equally created in His Image. God is love (1 John 4:8), and, by His grace, we are called to mature to His image (Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10) to be in one accord in pursuit of His righteousness, steadfast love and forgiveness. . . “taking up the full armor of God, so that we will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:13).

God’s prophet Jeremiah wrote about 700 years before Jesus was born. . .'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:13). God’s prophet Isaiah wrote "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug. (Isaiah 51:1)

We are called by the living God to pursue His righteousness, not our own agenda or values. Many people claim to love God but on their own terms. “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (Jude 1:4). God’s Apostle John, who was an *eyewitness* to the ministry and teachings of Jesus accurately wrote what Jesus taught. . ."If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (John14:15).

The Good News is that Jesus promised His disciples that he would send them, and all of us, the Helper. About 900 years before God incarnated himself as Jesus. . . King David writes for God Psalm 54:4. . *.* “Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.”

Therefore, the Apostle John wrote:

**John 14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

**John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

**John 15:10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

**1 John 2:3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

**1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

**2 John 1:6** And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

**John 14:16-18**

16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

17 *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

**John 14:25-29**

25 "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

29 "Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.

**John 16:7-8**

 7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

 God does not call us to live a righteous life that He defines, **on our own.** . . **that would be impossible**. And even with His help. . . we still fail, because we live in a fallen world. God looks for us surrendered-heart Believers to have the heart intent to practice life with His Holy Spirit guidance. We see this reality in 1 John 1:8-10*.* If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

This is why Jesus tells Nicodemus in John 3 that he must be **reborn of Spirit** or he cannot **see** or **enter** the kingdom of God. And this is why the Jews in Acts 2:37, call to Peter, “What shall we do?”. These Jews knew they did not have any spiritual power on their own to be saved from their chosen sin. But after hearing Peter’s preaching, with the power of the Holy Spirit, their hearts were cut (circumcised – Deuteronomy 30:6) and then they had a decision to make. These people could attempt to move forward on their own will or call to God for help because they were spiritually bankrupt and did not have any power on their own to save themselves from their depravity. This is where a lot of people chose in their mind. . .*well I want to come to God but I want to keep my old life-style. . . I want to hold on to a few things that I feel I cannot live without. . . I only want to feel good about claiming to be a Christian but still maintain my old lifestyle. I am not ready to give up what makes me happy even though I know that God wants me to but then. . . God does want me to be happy.*

There are many people who attend Church who got humbled by God but then were not willing to repent, turn from their fallen life-practice of sin. They got convicted but did not surrender their conviction to God. And many pastors do not want to hurt their feelings, so pastors preach inclusive sermons for those who are holding onto their willful, sinful life-practices.

God is looking for our allocution. A criminal is afforded the right to an allocution to the court and the judge. This is the opportunity for the defendant to confess without excuses that they are guilty and with a statement of how they are going to improve their future by not violating the law. The court does not want to hear that a defendant plans to continue in their willful practice of a criminal life. The criminal on his cross beside Jesus allocated.

"And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:41-43).

Focusing back on the Jews to whom Peter preached. . . these Jews had humbly surrendered to the conviction of God’s Holy Spirit and then God gave them the ability to turn from their sin (repent) of which they did not previously have the power to do. God does not leave us on our own to change or keep His commandments. God asks us to humble/surrender to His Holy Spirit conviction that first leads to a person’s salvation and then becoming empowered to live the Christian life.

**1 John 1:6-7** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

 We are gathered here today to worship the Lord God, Jesus the Christ, our Creator of life and specifically to observe that time, 2000 years ago, He was brutally crucified and confirmed dead by a Roman soldier piercing his side. . . then He was entombed. . .being sealed in a tomb guarded by Roman soldiers. But on the morning of the third day, Jesus, God Incarnate, walked from that very sealed tomb guarded by Roman soldiers who were ordered to watch over His Tomb so that His Resurrection would not happen. Many people can hold up a person to be a Messiah, but is their tomb empty?

God’s main goal for becoming one of us. . .

above living our life,

above walking our life-roads,

above demonstrating that the devil is a defeated rebellious being,

above modeling perfect eternal kingdom citizenship,

and above demonstrating the necessity for all of us to humble ourselves to God and be totally dependent on God the Father. . .

. . .was to be resurrected from the dead. Why?

Jesus’ Resurrection demonstrated His rule and mastery over sin and death and was the propitiation for all of humanity’s sins. Jesus was that one perfect unblemished sacrifice that the Law of God was never intended to provide. God never intended for the Law to save anyone. The Law was an object lesson, to teach fallen humanity that you can never merit enough good works on your own or add to Jesus’ works. . . to redeem yourself to God. But fallen man creates religion to control a path to God or within his self-made path project himself as a god demanding to be worshiped. Any and all who claim that the path to justification to God. . . is through them. . . is teaching a lie. *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,* who gave *Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time* (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

**Hebrews 10::4-12**

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;

6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. (Psalm 40:6)

7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'" (Psalm 40:7)

8 After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law), (Romans 8:3)

9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. (Psalm 40:8)

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, (Psalm 110:1)

We have the letter that God inspired His Apostle Paul to write to the church in Rome detailing God’s intent for our salvation through Jesus, the Christs’ Resurrection.

**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, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**AMEN**