

Shepherd, Poet, Fugitive, King: The Life of David

Today's Message: "David Says of Him" Acts 2: Resurrection Sunday March 31, 2024

Opening Scripture: Psalm 16:8–11 (ESV)

The experience of visiting the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem was beyond anything I could have anticipated. If you've ever been there, or if you ever get to go there, it surely will be one of the main stops on your tour of Israel. When you arrive at the garden, you step through the gates, and off to the right and down a little path, you are immediately greeted by the solemn sight of **Golgotha, the place of the skull—a rocky hill just outside the ancient city** walls where Jesus was crucified.

Sitting there, it was easy to imagine the events that unfolded over two millennia ago. After 15 or so minutes, you move on to the garden itself, where **a 2,000-year-old excavated tomb memorializes Jesus' resurrection.** Each member of our group had the opportunity to enter the tomb, one by one, take some snaps, and then exit. But it wasn't until I crossed the threshold of that ancient tomb that I truly felt it.

Inside, the tomb was cramped, cold, and dark, **a stark reminder that once you go in, you don't come out.** Whatever your life was supposed to be. Whatever it was that you hoped to accomplish—it's over; no one comes back from a cold stone grave. I was struck by the absolute finality of death. Crossing back over the threshold of that tomb entrance, it washes over you—two thousand years ago, Jesus of Nazareth walked out of a tomb just like this one, defying the sentence of death and offering hope to all mankind.

The Apostles saw things that, at first, their eyes could not believe.

- **Their Messiah and Master raised bodily** from the dead.
- **Christ Jesus then appears to them over a period of 40 days**, giving them many convincing proofs that, indeed, he is alive!
- **On the last day, they watched him ascend into heaven**, hidden from their sight by a cloud. They were so gob smacked, so transfixed by the sight of it, an angel had to appear to snap them out of it. Because that's how awesome it was.

Now, in obedience to Jesus' command, they gather, they pray, and they wait. They wait for Christ's promise to them that they will all receive the presence of God's Holy Spirit.

The Day of Pentecost dawns. They gather in the morning, and then they hear a sound like a windstorm blowing through the corridors of the streets, and then it enters the upper room. Then they see flames dancing atop everyone's heads—like fiery tongues. They are all indwelt, filled with the personal, transforming power of the living God. Men and women who were once spiritually dead in their sins are now made alive; previously enslaved to sin, they are now set free from its grip on them; spiritually blind eyes are suddenly opened to the truth: Jesus is the risen exalted Lord, and there is salvation in no other name.

This revival spills out into the streets. The city awakens to the familiar beat of shopkeepers and local vendors readying their booths and kiosks for the masses of visitors who've come to town to worship in the temple and spend their Greek money.

So naturally, they think everyone is sloshed and has been drinking all night. How else could they possibly describe what they're seeing?

With a sudden surge of courage and boldness, Peter speaks up in the power of the Spirit and reminds them that this whole scene is the fulfillment of the Prophet Joel: Acts 2:17–21 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” He then goes on to tell his fellow Israelites that they know full well that Jesus of Nazareth was famous for having performed mind-boggling feats of the supernatural. And he was delivered up to the authorities according to God’s foreknowledge and predestined plan. That they were guilty of using godless men to execute him by nailing him to a cross.

But now, God has raised Jesus from the dead because, as it turns out, it wasn’t even possible for death to hold him. And then he cites David:
For David says of him: Acts 2:25–31 For David says concerning him, [David speaking]

“I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

David sees his future descendent, the permanent and eternal heir to his throne who rises from the dead and is not abandoned to the grave or Hades.

Peter continues by telling them that this prophecy by David about his own Son has now been fulfilled: ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies your footstool.”

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Summary: In answer to the question—*why do these Christians behave like that? Why do they exist at all?* What is the origin of this strange, peculiar people who are proclaiming and declaring the glories of heaven, the wonders of God, the truth of salvation in the Messiah?

And Peter’s answer to that question is that Jesus of Nazareth has been raised bodily from the dead.

And that, my friends, is the message of Easter Sunday. It’s not bunnies, colored eggs, and hiding candy baskets, as fun as those things might be.

The message of Easter is: That the King, the royal descendant of David, the suffering servant who died for us to forgive our sins, has risen from the dead, never to die again, and has ascended to his heavenly throne, from which he now pours out the promised Holy Spirit on every person who believes this Gospel.

Transition: This message compels us to two responses and draws our attention to its inescapable results.

Two Responses

1. Their hearts are pierced with the truth, and they cry out for the answer. We see in both responses an internal thing and an external outworking of that thing. Luke writes in Acts 2:37: Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

We live in an increasingly noisy age where more people are speaking all at once, on the internet, on Spotify, YouTube, Zoom Chat, and Facetime—in the public square—a never-ending noise of claims, a cacophony of voices vying for our attention. But amid this increasing volume of ideas—this wall of sound and fury rushing in our direction, ***there is a strange silence in our culture. A silence of hearts that remain untouched by conviction***, souls adrift on the currents of apathy and indifference, or fear—that if we dare to challenge the upside-down nonsense of our corrupt and darkened culture, we’ll be canceled, rejected, and no longer welcomed among those we care for.

We live in strange times—in an age where truth, like art, is in the eye of the beholder; where immorality has become the new morality, and where faith and tradition seem like romantic, old-fashioned things that just went away with manual **typewriters, VHS players, and the Ford Pinto**.

We live in a world inundated with deception and half-truths. And we find ourselves needing stability (remember when “Sea Change” used to be once in a generation or a century?—now it happens every week). We long for something that will anchor us—that doesn’t change. We ache for clarity, and we look for people who speak with authority, unswayed by the shifting sands of our disposable pop culture.

And to be sure, we love everyone who disagrees with us. If you’re here today and you don’t have a faith relationship with Jesus, we want you to know you are welcome here; we love you.

But we also want you to understand where we’re coming from.

Illustration: This last week, a cargo tanker lost power in Baltimore and hit a normally very busy bridge, the Francis Scott Key Bridge. The bridge collapsed into the river within 2 seconds, and the road construction crews fell into the 47-degree water and the tangled wreckage of steel and concrete. Immediately, frantic efforts were made to try and locate and rescue these lost souls. If you saw someone drowning, wouldn’t compassion dictate and compel you to try and rescue them?

Listen, the reason why we Christians are constantly trying to direct the conversation to Jesus and his death on the cross for our sins, his resurrection, and victory over death—the reason we keep bothering you about this—is because we really do think our loved ones are drowning in a sea of deception and heartache and we have the truth, we have the cure. We are the rescued who’ve now become the rescuers of those lost and dying souls.

And in this world, we need men and women who hear the truth and respond with conviction. To be pierced through to the heart, cut to the very core—our consciences stabbing us with grief over how we have abandoned the truth.

This caused them to cry out, “What must we do?”

Peter answers them...

2. Peter prescribed repentance (inward change) and baptism (the visible sign of faith). Again, we clearly see an internal thing followed by an external thing. Acts 2:38–40 And Peter said to them, “**Repent and be baptized every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”⁴⁰ And with many other words, he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

The call is issued to the crowd. But the invitation is for every individual, “each of you,” he says. There’s no salvation apart from the Church—because we have been entrusted with the apostolic message of the gospel. The gospel is in the group.

But in a very real sense, there is no way that our corporate salvation can save you the individual. As some have said, while salvation is never private, it is deeply personal. **Your mom can’t repent and be baptized for you.** Your Grandma, despite her great love for the LORD and her strong faith, cannot make this decision for you, nor can she confer upon you her own faith as if to pass on a family heirloom.

There are no proxy salvations—every person must turn and believe.

What is repentance? Repentance is kind of misunderstood. It’s usually defined as directional. However, the Greek term *metanoia* comes from meta, meaning “beyond,” as in “meta-morphosis” and no’eō, meaning to “know,” which means to change one’s mind such that it initiates a course correction. Acts 17:30: He [Paul] also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. So everyone who hears this message is called, summoned, commanded by God to respond in repentance and faith.

Jesus has to explain this after his resurrection. He appears on the road to Emmaus with the disciples, who are discussing his death and all these events. Luke 24:46: “Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and would rise from the dead on the third day, **and repentance and the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name** to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

- Repentance can occur when the darkened lamp of the mind is suddenly lit—illuminated with the truth by the Holy Spirit.
- Repentance happens when the dead man gets up and walks out of the tomb. Called out of the grave.
- Repentance takes place when the unbeliever turns from their unbelief to faith and trust in the LORD.
- Repentance is an act of humility, an act of surrender to the God who summons us to himself.

Through public baptism. If repentance (*metanoia*) is the inner heart transformation, the change of mind, then baptism is the outward sign of that inner work.

- It is immersion in the waters of repentance, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Baptism is an act of proclamation, a public testimony of the individual’s union with Christ.
- It is a living picture that we have died to sin and its consequences and have been raised to life with Christ, a visible symbol of our allegiance to the truth and our putting off of all falsehoods.
- It is also that initiation rite that brings a new believer publicly into the community of faith.

Romans 6:1–5 “What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? ² Absolutely not! How can we who **died to sin** still live in it? ³ Or are you unaware that all of us who **were baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into his death**? ⁴ Therefore we were **buried with him**

by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection. ”

Col 2:12 “when you were ***buried with him in baptism***, in which you were ***also raised with him through faith*** in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Folks we are called to an internal change of heart and mind which sets us on a new path a new way, and the visible sign of that internal change is baptism in the name of Christ.

You say, “Well I missed the last baptism—what must I do?” Don’t worry, you can sign up for baptism for our summer outdoor services which is a great time to make that decision.

Those are the two responses: conviction of heart that bubbles up in confession; and repentance from unbelief and baptism in the Holy Spirit for salvation, the sign of which is our public profession of faith through water baptism.

3. The proclamation of Christ's resurrection resulted in many conversions and spiritual growth in new community. So now, what we see here is an immediate effect of the outpouring of the Spirit. These people are endowed with power from on high; they are enabled for proclamation and personal change.

Acts 2:41–47 Luke records the aftermath of this revival in the streets. “So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them. ⁴² **They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.** ⁴³ Everyone was **filled with awe**, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. ⁴⁵ They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

This change is affirmed through **devotion to sound doctrine from the Apostles**, rooted in ancient faith. It's seen in their **immersion in holy community** and their deep, **prayer-filled communion** with God and each other, both publicly and personally. They are compelled to a **life of generosity**.

They were filled with a sense of awe and wonder. Their fear of death has now been replaced with living in the awestruck fear of the LORD.

Illustration: Back in college, my roommate Pat was eager to show me something he knew would blow my mind. Being from Virginia, he used to tease me about my lack of experience with mountains higher than the Blue Ridge, though I found them beautiful in their own way. So, one day, Pat suggested we go hiking up to a ridge where we could catch a glimpse of some of the most majestic ranges in the NW.

We drove up to a spot, parked, and then began our hike. It was a while before we finally reached the summit of this ridge. The view was nothing short of breathtaking; the Cascade Mountain range stretched out before us on that perfectly clear day.

But just as we were basking in the awe-inspiring panorama, everything changed in an instant. Out of nowhere, a snow cloud enveloped us. In a panic, **Pat bolted down the mountain, and I found myself sprinting after him, my heart gripped with fear. I couldn't shake the terrifying thought of being discovered later, frozen on the trail, or worse, tumbling down and meeting Pat at his Land Cruiser several minutes ahead of schedule.**

As we gazed with awe at the beauty and splendor of God's creation, we were suddenly reminded **that the mountain that awes you can kill you.** The fire that warms you can burn your house down. The river that feeds your fields can also flood them and drown you.

And the new Christians in Acts 2, these repentant, baptized believers who have anchored themselves in community find themselves awestruck—overcome with a rapturous wonder at the God of wonders.

When you come to Christ you exchange every fear you've ever had:

- Fear of loss of your faculties, abilities, and opportunities.
- Fear of the loss of loved ones to disease.
- Fear of divorce or fear of a long and miserable marriage.
- And most of all, the Fear of Death.

All of it is now replaced with the awe-inspiring fear of the LORD—the God who saves you but who also has the power to destroy your soul and body in hell. The God who redeems you, but is also the God who stores up his wrath for the day of Judgment.

And now we all live in the awe-inspiring fear of the God who is our mountain, and the snowstorm. Our savior and our judge. Our deliverer and the one who will call us to account for what we did with Jesus.

When you heard this Gospel, did it cut you to the heart? Did you cry out for salvation and call on his name?

Did you repent inwardly and believe the message, announcing it to the congregation in the fear and trembling of a holy God.

When you heard of so great a salvation did you nod off, sleep through it?

Did you yawn your way to the end of the message?

Was there no stirring below, no quickening of your thoughts toward the truth?

No rush of holy anxiety?

No urgency of response?

What did we do with the crucified and risen Jesus?

Let's pray:

What are you afraid of today? What secret terrors did you bring with you in that door? Whatever they are, however those fears are cutting you to the heart, would you surrender your whole life—all that you are to the crucified, risen, King Jesus this morning?

Would you answer the call to repentance—an inner change of mind and heart; to baptism—an outward sign of your newfound change of heart and direction?