

Sermon – 4 April, 2010
Resurrection Proof

Romans 8:11

- Today is Resurrection Sunday
- |

In 1996 Archaeologists Working in Israel uncovered this stone (show picture)

- This is called the Ekron Inscription
- Ekron was an ancient town which belonged to the Philistines
- This is what the translation says
- *"This temple was built by 'Akish, son of Padi, son of Yasid, son of Ada, son of Ya'ir, ruler of Ekron, for Ptgyh, * his (divine) lady. May she bless him, and guard him, and prolong his days, and bless his land."*

From This Inscription:

- They have concluded a variety of facts
- That there was a temple built by Akish
- That it was built for Pthgy a divine lady – who they assume is a goddess.
- That a real temple existed and that a goddess was worshipped there.
- Since then a large number of significant historical documents have been written about this
- All based upon one, partial historical document whose authorship is unknown.

Today I want To Show You That There is a Great Deal of Proof for the Resurrection of Christ

- I want to give you evidence in the Bible, and in history

Proof 1: There Were Witnesses

- A court of law requires two people to witness
- The Bible tells us that over 500 people witnessed the risen Christ
- These witnesses wrote parts of the Bible so that the truth could be preserved.
- Acts 1:21-22
- These men saw it with their own eyes, and wrote the Bible as a testimony.

Most People Already Have Faith First

- People immediately discount the Bible, even though there are multiple historical witnesses, and many facts to support it.
- But people are willing to believe that there was a goddess and a temple in Ekron based on one fragment of stone.

FF Bruce Quote:

- People have already assumed that the bible is not true because it says this which seem unreal and wild.
- FF Bruce quote (put on screen)

Proof 2: God Says So

- This is not proof in the normal sense, but it is proof because we know God is real.
- We have experience Him in our lives
- We know that He is not dead, but a present reality to us
- The Bible says in John 11:25
- If we believe in Christ will not die, but will experience the resurrection.

Proof 3: History Tells Us So

- There are historical documents that have recorded the facts of the resurrection
- Like Jewish Historian Josephus who said (read quote)
- There are other historical sources, but the Bible remains our main historical
- The Bible had a number of authors who each confirmed the resurrection of Christ.
- Quote from Blaiklock

Now It Gets Interesting

- The next two proofs are very down to earth.
- You need to have your thinking cap on.

Proof 4: What Jesus Said After His Resurrection

- This is my favourite proof
- There are a number of things that Jesus said after He rose from the dead
- These were entirely new things not mentioned even once before he died on the cross
- The disciples would never have known about these things if I wasn't for the resurrection

Things Jesus Said After His Resurrection:

- Matt 28:18-20 (and the other commands to preach the gospel)
- Luke 24:45-49 (the command to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit)

Basically

- The Day of Pentecost happened because of the Resurrection
- The Giving of the Holy Spirit Happened because of the Resurrection
- The Great Commission was given...
- Disciples wouldn't have known to have done these things
- There would be no church today if it were not for the resurrection.

Proof 5: The Early Believers Were Willing To Give Their Lives

- Imagine for a moment that you are a spy for a foreign nation
- Imagine that you hold secrets that were so classified and important that if they got out they would threaten the existence of millions of people.
- Now imagine that you are arrested by a country that demands those secrets
- You refuse to share what you know and are threatened by death
- You refuse to give in and are executed but in doing so you save the lives of millions of people.
- That makes sense because the person is committed to what they believe in, they are convinced it is true and are willing to give their life to defend the truth.

Scenario Continued

- Now imagine that you are not a spy, you don't know any secrets – you are just an ordinary person.

- Now imagine that you go to some Extremist Organisation and say – “I have classified information that could help your cause and result in the deaths of millions of your enemies.”
- The Organisation says “Thank you, what is the information.”
- You say, “sorry I’ve changed my mind I’m not going to tell you.”
- They then threaten you with death, you still refuse to say anything, so they execute you.
- That **doesn’t make sense** because they would be dying for something they didn’t even believe in.
- Normal ordinary people do not die for something they don’t believe in

Deaths of the Twelve Apostles (read Wikipedia)

- Peter – crucified upside down in Rome (AD 64 – about 30 years after Jesus died)
- Andrew – crucified on an X cross in Achaea (**show St Andrews spider**)
- James - beheaded in Jerusalem (AD 44)
- John – died of natural causes, but was dipped in boiling oil in Rome
- Bartholomew – skinned alive & beheaded in Armenia
- Matthew – Battle Axe
- James son of Alpheus – beaten to death in Egypt
- Thomas – speared in Chennai, India
- Jude – martyred in Lebanon.
- Simon the Zealot – sawn in half in Iran
- Matthias – Judas replacement was stoned to death in modern day Georgia

Before the Resurrection:

- The disciples went back to their fishing boats
- Not one disciple was left to support Jesus – they scattered
- But the resurrection gave them back their life, and enthusiasm for Jesus.
- The resurrection changed their lives – and they were willing to die for Christ.

Acts 5:27-41

- If this action is of God, nothing will be able to stop it.

The Resurrection is at the Centre of Our Faith

- If we don’t believe in the resurrection of Christ
- We don’t have a faith at all.

We Should Share this in our Witnessing

- The early church talking about this all the time

Main Point

- The resurrection says that nothing is impossible
- Even death which is the final end and the finish doesn’t mean anything
- The Resurrection power of Christ is in us
- We have the ability to do anything in Jesus name
- The Things God has called us to do – are not impossible, but through God’s grace we will achieve.

This Resurrection Sunday

- Look at the dead things in your life
- Look at the things which seem too far gone
- Remember what Jesus said in John 11:25. **What Does it All mean To You?**
- Let us one again turn afresh to Christ – and give him the gift of our lives.