

Easter Sunday/April 21, 2019 # 19030-A
What Would It Take...?

I. One Week Later...John 20:24-28

- A. Note the skepticism. All the disciples were skeptical of the resurrection at first
 - 1. They called their sisters crazy. Lk.24:10-11
 - 2. But Thomas was the most angry and skeptical...**John 20:24-28**
- B. Note the shape of saving faith/gospel according to Jesus. Rom.10:9-10
 - 1. Deity of Christ: *My Lord and My God...*
 - 2. Resurrection of Christ: *Touch Me and see...*
- C. Note the path to saving knowledge of God: *Verbal witness of reliable people.*
 - 1. Blessed are those who do not see, but
- D. *Thomas, you should have believed based on the testimony of your brothers and sisters.*
 - 1. *Trust the witness of reliable, transformed people.*
 - 2. *This is still how God works, in and through humans...*

II. Today many are skeptical of who Jesus is and what he did. So, let's consult those skeptical disciples in their own testimony. (*skepticism regarding the gospel, the person and work of Christ, is not based on the absence of historical evidence. It is based on a-priori atheism.*)

- A. What would it take to transform a frightened deserter into a fearless, miracle-working preacher? **Peter.** (Lk.22:54-62/Acts 1-3)
 - 1. According to Peter—*Jesus's physical resurrection.*
 - 2. Peter's proclamation to Cornelius. Acts 10:39-43; (Acts 2:22-23; 3:15)
 - a) **2 Pet.1:16. We did not make this up!**
 - 3. *And Peter sealed his testimony with his own martyrdom. 64-68 AD*
- B. What would it take to transform a violent, angry, anti-Christian Pharisee into the Apostle to the Gentiles? **Paul.** Acts 9; 22; 26:12-18
 - 1. According to Paul—*Jesus's physical resurrection.* Gal.1:11-24; 1 Cor.15:3-9
 - a) Paul was converted by the resurrected Lord 1 ½ to 2 years after the crucifixion.
 - 2. Paul's preaching Acts 13:29-33; Paul's first recorded sermon.
 - 3. *And Paul sealed his testimony with his blood. Beheaded in Rome. 64-68AD*
- C. What would it take to convince an unbelieving younger brother that his older brother was the Messiah. **James.** (Jn.7:5)
 - 1. Transforming him into one of the most courageous proclaimers of Christ, and the leader of the Church in Jerusalem?
 - 2. According to James—*Jesus's physical resurrection.* 1 Cor.15:7; (Gal.1:19)
 - 3. *And James sealed his testimony with his own martyrdom. 62 AD. Thrown off the pinnacle of the Temple and beaten and stoned to death.*
- D. What would it take to transform a frightened group of skeptical disciples into a dynamic force that eventually took over the Roman empire?
 - 1. According to them—*Jesus's physical resurrection.*
 - 2. John speaks for all of them. 1 Jn.1:1-4.
 - 3. *And these also sealed their testimony with their own blood.*
 - 4. The existence and proclamation of the early church, plus its growth into a transforming force in the Roman empire. *They all claim it is because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

III. What did the fact of Christ's resurrection mean to these people? *The same thing it means to us.*

A. The Future of God is afoot and we can be a part of it. Jn.11:25-26

1. The Resurrection was supposed to happen at the end of time, but Christ's resurrection means that resurrection life is in play right now.
2. His plan is to judge and resurrect the entire universe—we are called to be a part of that new creation. Rev.20-22.

B. The Knowledge of God is available and we can trust it.

1. Belief/Faith is knowledge that you bank on. (Jesus to Martha)
 - a) Faith is not the opposite of knowledge—it is the presence of trust based on reason and sufficient credibility.
2. *Verbal testimony from reliable experts is genuine knowledge of reality. Reality is more than what we see in this age (empiricism)*
3. *All of these witnesses present the resurrection of Christ as a fact, not a feeling or a vision or an "inner illumination."*

C. The Grace of God is beckoning and we must respond to it. John 3:16

1. Jesus said to trust Him personally. Jn.14:6
2. His death, burial, and resurrection is proof of eternal life, but we must repent and believe.