

Message: Resurrection
By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison
Acts 2:29-34
Prayer Sermon Series
April 4, 2021

INTRO: The resurrection of Jesus is the single most transformative event since creation. How can a dead man return to life, walk through walls, eat, disappear, yet appear perfectly normal? How could a doubtful disciple, Thomas, put his hand into Jesus' side and touch the piercing on Jesus' resurrected body? How could Jesus ascend to heaven? How did terrified disciples become bold witnesses of Jesus? I have more questions than answers, but if I could explain everything I would not need to worship. There is mystery here. The context of Acts 2:29-33 is the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and the church was born. Pentecost excited and empowered the disciples. Pentecost confused and bewildered outsiders (they thought the disciples were drunk). The cowardly denier, Peter, who had feared arrest as a follower of Jesus, became a new man. Full of the Holy Spirit, he preached the first sermon in the history of the church. Peter explained the good news. When asked what they could do, Peter said, *"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. 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"* (Acts 2:38-39).

APPLICATION: Have you heard the Good News? Jesus died for our sins. God raised Him from the dead. The Holy Spirit gives life. We receive the gift of salvation when we trust Jesus Christ. It is easy to do. Yet, our pride resists. Most feel either unworthy (God doesn't love me), or that we can save ourselves (by being good). Whether "naughty or nice" all need a Savior. We all need forgiveness. We cannot get to heaven on our own. Jesus makes these gifts possible. He also provides meaning

and purpose in life, gives us a worshipping community to belong to, helps us use the Scriptures to navigate life, and gives us a new identity. Today can be the day if you have never asked Jesus to come into your heart: *"... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved"* (Romans 10:9). Please tell someone if you do this. We are here for you.

Bible in 5 words: CREATION: God created us in His Image. When He created humans, it was "very good."

FALL: Things were good until the tempter in the Garden "opened the eyes" of the original pair. Adam and Eve "fell." They fell hard. They tried to shift responsibility by blaming the serpent, each other, & God. We have been in "the fall" ever since.

ISRAEL –God selected one specific group of people and spent centuries trying to hammer into their heads the sort of God He was and how He cared about certain things. The Old Testament tells the story of the hammering process. Israel was created to deal with the problem of THE FALL. Since sin separated us from God, God created a sacrificial system to reunite us with Him.

JESUS Now comes shock/awe: A Jewish man shows up and says He is God, has always existed, that He created the world, could forgive sins, that He would rise from the dead, and would someday return and judge the world. It is the most shocking thing ever been said and done in human history. Holy Week started with Palm Sunday and Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. That mountaintop experience ended with Jesus again being lifted up, only this time on a cross. The crucifixion was brutal. He was dead and buried. But something happened.

EP on the resurrection

CHURCH Our text this morning (Acts 2:29-34 Pew Bibles p 1082) is what **Peter** said on the day of Pentecost. Peter was one of the first followers of Jesus. He said he'd never deny Jesus. He used a sword in Jesus' defense. But when Jesus was arrested, Peter tagged along behind. While warming himself by a fire, a servant girl accused him of being a disciple. Peter's bravado collapsed like a cheap tent. He swore & denied

3x he was a disciple. Crushed by the crucifixion, he went into hiding, fearing for his life. But a miracle happened. Peter, who had no confidence, now had confidence to be a witness.

There are 3 things evident in our text that explains what transformed Peter.

*"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. 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, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. **This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.** 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. 3 things changed everything:*

1.) **This Jesus God raised up** = the resurrection. A dead man rose from the grave.

2.) **we all are witnesses** it wasn't the Empty Tomb or what the women said (angels had spoken to them) that transformed them – They saw the resurrected Jesus with their own eyes. Ask doubting Thomas. We are changed.

3.) The **outpouring of the Holy Spirit**. 50 days after Jesus ascended & went to heaven, on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were filled with Jesus' Spirit. Everything changed. The cowardly follower got his confidence back. He no longer cared what anybody thought – he would testify. They responded. **"Brothers, what shall we do?" 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.** Acts 2:37-39 Peter changed. The resurrection/Pentecost gave him new life. **REDEEMED** = best word to describe what the Bible is about. We can make extreme changes, too. God gave us opportunity for Resurrection/Empowerment. We must choose to follow. And then we're on mission, like the disciples, to help others follow Jesus, too.

Former Navy Seal, Rich Diviney, wrote “The Attributes.” While skills are important, attributes are, too. They are attitudes, behaviors, qualities, and traits like perseverance, humility, a sense of humor. Attributes probably won’t show up on an SAT test. 85% of those who try to become a Seal fail. Rich said that we think of a Seal as having a chiseled hard body, but they try to outsmart their opponents. Seals have a grueling training regimen. One part is called “Hell Week.” They nearly kill the recruits. During Hell week, the instructors tempt prospective Seals into quitting. Rich said that one night during Hell week, as the men are lying on the beach, exhausted, hungry, freezing, an instructor rang the bell and shouted, “*Warm blankets. Hot coffee. Warm glazed donuts. All you have to do is come ring the bell.*” To ring the bell meant quitting the dream of being a Seal. Rich said the guy next to him yelled back at the instructor, “*Do you have chocolate glazed? Because if you don’t have chocolate glazed, I’m not ringing the bell.*” Rich laughed at the absurdity. Then he looked to his left and noticed a guy on the beach who was shivering and freezing like everyone else. He was NOT laughing. Five minutes later, the bell rang. It was the guy who didn’t laugh. Rich said, “Humor is an attribute.” (I’ve found that if I can laugh at something, it will no longer own me.)

There’s humor in this Pentecostal story – the crowd mocks the disciples when the Holy Spirit was poured out. They were accused of being drunk at 9 a.m. Peter, who had rung the bell earlier when he denied he was on Jesus’ team, is back. He’s not ringing the “I quit” bell now. He’s fully engaged. He has the perseverance attribute. He will die for his belief. Peter gave the first sermon in church history. He no longer was preoccupied with himself. He no longer cared what anybody thought of him. The movement wasn’t about him, it was about Jesus. He got up and danced. He was the first dancer in a new movement. He wanted everyone to join with him. He was changed. He was full of joy and energy. He wanted people to follow Jesus. This is why we’re here. Like Peter, we are witnesses to the love of God through Jesus. Jesus loved

parties. We want to invite you to His “Happy Easter” party. It's full of fun and celebration.

At the 2009 Sasquatch music festival in the State of Washington, there was a video made of a guy who started dancing. He doesn't have shirt or shoes, but he's into the dance. Soon, another guy joined him, and then a third. Perhaps you've seen this video clip. There is a narrator describing this event. It lasts 3 minutes. Watch and listen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW8amMCVAJQ>

“The best way to make a movement is to courageously follow and show others how to follow. When you find a lone nut doing something great, have the guts to be the first person to stand up and join in.”

Peter was the first dancer. The music wasn't about him – but he went first. Jesus is the music. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Resurrection and the Life. The other disciples quickly joined him. Then more came. A movement was born. But it wasn't about the dancers, it has always been about the one who is the Lord of the dance. This dance going on around the world for nearly 2,000 years.

There's a song in our hymnal I used to play on the guitar when I was in student ministry. Perhaps you're familiar with it, but probably not. I'd love for you to learn it. I'd love even more for you to learn to follow the Lord of the Dance.

LORD OF THE DANCE

Jesus is the most incredible person who has ever lived. And He is still alive. He's got a dance party. It's His movement. It's called “His Church.” Not everyone in the church are good dancers...but the dance is not about us, it's about Him. But He is the best music of all – we get to respond. He is Risen – He is Risen Indeed. He is Lord. We exist to help others follow Jesus.

(Sasquatch transcript)

If you've learned a lot about leadership and making a movement – then let's watch a movement happen, start to finish in under 3 minutes and dissect some lessons. First, a leader needs the guts to stand alone and look ridiculous, but what he's doing is so simple it's almost instructional. This is key: You must be easy to follow. Now here comes the first follower with a crucial role. He publicly shows everyone else how to follow. Notice how the leader embraces him as an equal. It's not about the leader anymore, it's about THEM. Notice how he calls for his friends to join in. It takes guts to be the first follower. You stand out and brave ridicule yourself. Being the first follower is an underappreciated form of leadership. The first follower transforms a lone nut into a leader. If the leader is the flint, the first follower is the spark that really makes the fire. Here's the 2nd follower – this is the turning point. It's proof the first has done well. Now it's not a lone nut or two nuts, three is a crowd and a crowd is news. A movement must be public. Make sure outsiders see more than just the leader. Everyone needs to see the follower because new followers emulate the followers not the leader. Here come 2 more, now 3 more immediately. Now we've got momentum. This is the tipping point and now we have a

movement. As more people jump in, it's no longer risky. If they were on the fence before there's no reason not to join in now. They won't stand out, they won't be ridiculed, and they will be part of the in-crowd if they hurry. But for the next minute you'll see the rest who prefer to be part of the crowd because eventually they will be ridiculed for not joining in. That is how a movement is made. Let's recap what we've learned. If you are a version of the shirtless dancer guy, all alone, remember the importance of nurturing your first few followers as equals making everything clearly about the movement not about you. Be public. Be easy to follow.

The biggest lesson is leadership is over-glorified. It started with the shirtless guy and he will get all the credit, but you saw what really happened. It was the first follower that transformed a lone nut into a leader. There's no movement w/o the first follower. We're all told that we all need to be leaders but that would be really ineffective. The best way to make a movement is to courageously follow and show others how to follow. When you find a lone nut doing something great, have the guts to be the first person to stand up and join in.