

Acts 17:30-34

by Zac Zachariassen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a proven fact that provides assurance of eternal life and salvation, and it is a command from God to repent and accept the message of salvation.

Duration: 39:35

Scripture: Amos 4:12, Matthew 22:29, Acts 17:30-32, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 15:20

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to teach children about salvation. He mentions that he and his family come from the Faroe Islands, which are located in a cold part of the world. The preacher emphasizes the power of the gospel in transforming lives and nations, stating that no other message or philosophy can compare. He then discusses the concept of judgment day and how God has appointed a specific day for judgment, with Jesus Christ as the appointed judge. The sermon concludes with a reference to Paul's preaching on Mars Hill in Athens, where he spoke about repentance and the resurrection of the dead.

Transcript

All these children and what a wonderful privilege it is to be able to teach these children the way of salvation. It is also so nice to see all of you and now about four or five weeks have passed since I was here last. We have had the joy and privilege, my wife and our two sons, to be in the Bahamas now for about two months.

We come, as you perhaps know, from the Faroe Islands and if you don't know where the Faroe Islands are, they are about 300 miles north of Shetland or Scotland about 200 miles south of Iceland. So, in that part of the world, today, it is very cold. I spoke home last night or yesterday and they said that.

Although they felt that the spring was coming, it was still very cold and what a difference it is to be here in your lovely warm climate. But what means most of all to us is the spiritual heat and warmth that we feel among you and can enjoy the Christian fellowship with you and we thank you so very much for it. I would like this morning for us to turn to the Acts of the Apostles and we will read a few verses from chapter 17.

Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17 and we shall read from verse 30 to 34, the end of the chapter. Acts 17 from verse 30. This is the message or the sermon that Paul preached on Marsh Hill in Athens.

Verse 30, he says, and the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commanded all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from them, howbeit certain men claim unto him and believe, among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

We celebrate Easter, and this is Easter morning. The Russian Christians, when they greet each other on an Easter day like this one, they say, which means, Christ is alive. And the answer is, yes, indeed, Christus Vaski.

Yes, indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ is alive, because he rose again from the dead. We can never stress enough the importance of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul wrote to Timothy and asked him to remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David had risen from the dead.

There are many today who do not believe this fact. This actually is the best proven fact of history, that the Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. And now about two thousand years have passed, and there has been no one who was able to deny that the Lord Jesus Christ is alive.

But on the opposite, there are thousands and millions of people who have experienced the resurrection power and saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. I read somewhere that a missionary in India, coming into a city or a town, saw that crowds of people were gathering together and had a celebration. So when he was asking what the celebration and procession was all about, they said it was because they had found a bone of Buddha, and they were so glad about that.

But when we think of it, if someone had found a bone of the Lord Jesus Christ, we would not have any reason to celebrate or be happy. But praise God, he is risen from the dead, he is alive, he is not in the grave. There is no bone to be found of him, because the Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

And Paul the Apostle had the privilege here to stand on Mars Hill and deliver this message, the message of the gospel, of which the resurrection is of such utmost importance. And he preached unto them, it says new things, news from different parts of the country and from all over the world. But they had never heard anything like these news that Paul preached that day, that a dead man had risen and become alive again.

And we saw in the end of the chapter the reaction of the people, some of them mocked. And there are many today also, when they hear the Christian message and when they hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, they mock, they do not believe in it. But we saw here in the first place that we have the assurance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We read in verse 31, because he that is God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man which he hath ordained, whereas he hath given assurance unto all men in that he raised him from the dead. So we have this assurance, first of all, that he is risen and it is a wonderful divine miracle that the Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. Materialistic and unbelieving men mock and disbelieve it.

And the Lord Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees that you err because you do not know the scriptures nor the power of God. But those of us who have read the Bible and know the scriptures, we know that the

resurrection is a wonderful assurance. First, a fulfillment of the Old Testament, all that was said concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and then also what he himself said, that he would rise again on the third day.

And then also this assurance concerns the faith of the human race as well as the faith of every individual. Every one of us is one day going to meet God. And here we read of the assurance of it.

And the assurance of it, Paul says, is that he hath raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. The man who the Jews as well as the Romans thought was dead, and it was done with him. But the Lord rose again on the third day.

And because of that, we have the assurance, Paul says, that we will one day meet him. And if we do not acknowledge him as our Saviour and our risen Lord, one day every human being is bound to face the Lord Jesus Christ, not as their Saviour, but as their Judge. And here Paul is speaking to these wise Greek people.

They were so wise, humanly speaking. There were philosophers among them, but they did not understand, they did not believe this simple but wonderful and divine message of salvation. Their wisdom had not been able to lift up their nation, or even to lift up sinners who had fallen into adultery and sin out of the mire.

But when Paul came to Greece, to Athens and Corinth, and he was preaching the gospel to them, there were people who had been slaves of sin and Satan for many years, who, when they heard the message, accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and were completely changed. When we read 1 Corinthians, especially chapter 6, we see how and what a wonderful change this message of the gospel and the resurrection of Christ had done to them and meant to these people. There is no message, no philosophy in the world that can do what the gospel has done and has proved through the centuries, saving people and changing lives and families and even countries.

And so here we see that we have the assurance of men one day facing God. As it says in Amos, that we must prepare to meet our God because a judgment day is coming. And then also in verse 31, Paul says that God has appointed a day.

In verse 31, He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained, whereof He has given us assurance, assurance unto all men. So God has appointed a certain day. In other words, this is saying that God has appointed a day for you and me and every human being that we must face God.

And God has an appointment with you and with me. When I was a teenager, only about 16 years of age, not quite 16, it was my joy and privilege, after going to Sunday school all my childhood, to receive the assurance of salvation and meeting the Lord Jesus Christ personally and receiving or accepting Him into my life and receiving the assurance of salvation. I remember this night when my father asked me, and he said, Zachs, are you saved? Do you have eternal life? And I had sometimes been asked this question before, and I had said to persons who had asked me, yes, I was saved, I have eternal life.

But I really didn't. I had no assurance of salvation. But this evening, when my father asked me, I saw that I could not carry on like this.

I had to be honest. I had to face this question with my personal salvation and have an appointment with the Lord Jesus Christ before it was too late. And that night, as I struggled there in my parents' bedroom, knowing all the scriptures that I had learned in Sunday school by heart, I could not grasp the assurance of salvation.

I knew it was only by faith, only by believing. But I tried so hard to believe, but I didn't really understand what it was to believe. And then my father said to me, you remember that the other day you told us that you had read in the papers that a young man from the Faroe Islands had drowned in Aberdeen in Scotland.

Tell me, when you read that, did you believe it? I said, of course, I believed it. I'm sure that it was true. And then my father turned to 1 John, the first epistle of John, and chapter 5, and he read from verse 9, If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his son.

And when he read those words, if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, then I realized what my father was getting on. If I could believe the papers, if I could believe what men said, and what the papers were saying, then surely I also could believe what God said, because God cannot lie. And I thought to myself, of course, but what does God say? God says that he who believes or trusts in my son hath eternal life.

And then he read on in verse 10, He that believeth on the son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son. And I thought to myself, I don't want to make God a liar.

And that is exactly what I'm doing if I'm doubting, and not trusting in what God says, and what Christ has done. And God says concerning his son, that if I that believe in what he did on the cross, then God says that that hath eternal life. And I was doubting what God testified regarding his son.

And then God also was testifying to me, that if I believe, then I have eternal life, not because of anything I did, or because what my father and mother said, but because of what God says concerning his son, and what the Lord Jesus Christ his son hath done on the cross of Calvary, shedding his blood, and then on the third day rising again, and he is alive today. And as I pondered this, and I thought, what am I going to do? Am I going to make God a liar, or am I going to believe him, and trust in what he says, and what God has done? And that night, I put my trust in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, just as I believe the papers, and believe trustworthy people like my parents and my friends, and they can fail. But I knew that God cannot fail, he cannot lie.

And as I read, as my father read further, here in 1 John chapter 5, it says, And this is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And when I read those words, the Spirit of God witnessed with my spirit that I personally have eternal life, not because I felt anything supernatural, or saw a vision or anything, only because I trusted and put my confidence in what the Lord Jesus Christ hath done for me, and the witness of God and his word concerning his Son. And that night, I had the assurance of salvation. This is what you can have this morning, the assurance of salvation, the assurance of eternal life.

And note what it says, that ye may know. These things have I written unto you, that ye, you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know. Not feel, not hope, but know.

And that's wonderful, the Scriptures is full of this assurance and knowledge that we can have if we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the simple but wonderful message of the Gospel. And when Paul was preaching here on Mars Hill, salvation, the way of God providing salvation through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified some years previous, and then they heard this news for the first time, that this crucified, the Lord Jesus Christ, also rose again on the third day.

Wonderful news, a wonderful message, but so strange to these wise Greeks. They did not want to believe it. They mocked.

And there are many people today, although they don't mock audibly in their hearts, they are full of skepticism and disbelief. They don't want to believe what God has said. They don't want to believe this wonderful message of salvation.

But are you here this morning? Consider these things. We have the assurance of man once going to meet God. And you and I personally have to face Him, meet Him, either as our Saviour while we are here, or as our judge at the last day.

And then it will be too late. We have to bow our hearts before Him. We have to accept His provision of salvation for us.

So He has appointed the day, He has appointed the place, and we read of this place in Revelation 20, when John is seeing in his vision the great white throne, the final judgment. And He has also appointed the persons, each individual human being, at that day, at that place. And He has also appointed the judge.

And the judge is the Lord Jesus Christ, who now offers Himself to be your Saviour, prepared to meet thy God. And you can do that here this morning, and receive Him as your Saviour. As we read in Romans chapter 10 and verse 9, that if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. You can have the assurance of salvation here where you sit this morning, just by opening your heart and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, as your King, as your Lord, who rose again, who is here this morning. The truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ not only rose and became alive again two thousand years ago, but the fact is that He is just as alive this morning and here as He was on that first Easter morning, the resurrection morning.

And this is what the Lord Jesus Christ tried to impress on His disciples, that He was not dead, because it took a great while before they really understood and grasped it, that the Lord Jesus Christ was alive and was risen from the dead. And therefore He had to appear to them again and again to make them see it and understand it and have this assurance in their hearts that He was alive. For instance, when Thomas said that he didn't want to believe it until he had put his finger into his hand and his hand in his side, he would not believe it.

But he didn't realize that when he said that, the Lord Jesus Christ was there, invisible, and heard it. And although Thomas didn't see the Lord, the Lord saw Thomas. And eight days after when he appeared to him and asked Thomas to do exactly that which he had said, he was so amazed that he had no words

except, he said, my Lord and my God.

He understood and it dawned upon him that the Lord Jesus Christ was not dead anymore. And although he had not seen Him, and not until that day, he heard Him, he saw Him, and he knew everything about Him. And this is exactly the same with you and me.

And has been ever since, every day through the centuries, till this very hour and minute, the Lord Jesus Christ is alive and is a reality. He is here and He is nearer and closer to you than the next person, closer to you than your own breath. He is here and He is ready to save you.

And you can just ask Him and hand over your soul and your faith into His hand. And He will save you and He will deliver you from that awful day when the world is going to stand before Him and to be judged. He has an appointment with every human being.

He has appointed the day of the time, the place, the persons and the judge. And here we are this morning. We can be delivered and saved from that day.

And then, the Gospel is also a command. The Gospel is not only a pleasant and nice message. It is a wonderful message, a powerful message.

But it is not something that you may listen to, if you like, and may leave it alone. The Gospel really is a command, an ultimatum, if you like. Because we read here in verse 30, and the times of this ignorance, God winked at, God now commanded all men everywhere to repent.

So the Gospel this morning, although it's a wonderful message, a powerful message, it's not a message that we shall take lightly. Because it's a command from God, and this is the only way of salvation. And therefore, God commands all of us to heed unto it and to accept it.

He commands every one of us to repent. And if we do that, God will do the saving, and He will deliver us. And His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will enter our life by His Holy Spirit.

And He will give us the power and strength to live for Him. Because His life, His resurrection life, is a wonderful reality in our life. He does not save us and then leave us alone and let us just carry on in our own strength.

No, when He saves someone, He gives us also the power to live the Christian life. And that's the wonderful thing about Christianity and the message of salvation. Now, let me close by just saying that there were three reactions to the message of Paul this day.

As I already have said, it says that some of them mocked when they heard of the resurrection of the dead. They could not believe that a dead man could rise again and become alive again. That was beyond their human reasoning.

And the Sadducees, they were men like that. They didn't believe in the resurrection. They didn't believe in angels or in spirits.

And the Lord Jesus said to them once, as I said earlier, ye err because you do not know the Scriptures, neither the power of God. The power of God unto salvation is wonderful. He can save you this morning if you start believing and stop disbelieving and mocking in your heart.

Just accept the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, this wonderful truth of salvation and resurrection and you will experience the resurrection power, the saving power in your own personal life. The second reaction we read in the same verse, verse 32. And others said, we will hear thee again of this matter.

In other words, they put it off, they procrastinated, they didn't want to come to grips with it just then. They wanted perhaps to do it later. But that is very dangerous to put off the question of salvation to later.

Because now is the day of salvation. Actually the only time we have is today. And it's this very minute that we have.

And God's time is today. God's time is now. So don't procrastinate.

Don't put the question of your salvation off till tomorrow or another day because it may never come. But trust in the Lord Jesus Christ now and he will save you. And then thirdly we believe, now we see that some believe in verse 34.

However, certain men claim unto him and believe and then they mention them by name. I trust this morning that the result of you hearing this message again, you have heard it many times before, will be that you will be in the third category that we read of here. That there were certain men and women who believed and accepted the message that Paul preached this day and they were saved.

They received eternal life, the assurance of eternal life and one day entering heaven. I trust that you won't be among those who continue disbelieving and mocking and among those who put off the question of their salvation. May God bless his word.

May he bless every one of us this morning. And how wonderful it would be if this Easter day would be the day of your personal salvation. You putting your confidence in what the Lord Jesus Christ did for you on the cross and on that Easter morning.

And in what God the Father is testifying concerning his Son and concerning you. Believe it. Believe him because he cannot lie and you will be God's child and you will have salvation and eternal life.

Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father we thank thee for thy Son the Lord Jesus Christ who thou gavest for us on the cross. Send him into this fallen and wicked world. We thank thee for the wonderful way of salvation and deliverance and escape from the judgment thou hast given us.

We pray as we have meditated on thy word again this morning that thou would speak to our hearts and if there should be someone here this morning who has not yet had the assurance of salvation that thy spirit at this moment will testify and witness with his or her spirit that they have eternal life and are the sons or daughters of the living God. We commit ourselves into thy hands thanking thee for thy word and asking thee to bless each and every one of us as we part now in the name of thy Son the Lord Jesus Christ our beloved Saviour. Amen.

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