

"Jesus Christ is Lord Over Death"

Acts 2:22-24

This past Friday we noted three overarching truths contained in Acts 2:22-24. First, the power of the Father in His Son; God worked through Jesus Christ attesting to His divine authority (v. 22). Secondly, the plan of the Father for His Son; God planned for Jesus Christ to die by the hands of godless men (v. 23). Finally, the prevailing of the Father through His Son; God raised Jesus Christ out from the power of death (v. 24).

This morning I would like us to consider the idea that is contained in verse 24 of our present paragraph.

Our text is in the middle of Peter's sermon that was preached on the day of Pentecost as found in Acts 2:14-36. "Peter's sermon is the first recorded sermon of the Christian era. The site is in the vicinity of the temple; the time, 9 AM; the audience, over three thousand Jews from all lands; the apostles are standing with Peter, the gesture itself being their consent to his words."

Peter's theme is to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is both Lord and Christ (v. 36). He goes about proving his point by, "rehearsing the ministry, death and triumph of Jesus."

There are three primary features that I would like us to consider this morning as we look at verse 24.

- I. The resurrection of Jesus Christ by the Father authenticated His position as Son (v. 24a)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ by the Father is an event that punctuated His approval of all that His Son is and does (Acts 2:24, 32, 3:15, 26, 4:10, 10:40, 13:30, 37, Rom 10:9).

"Without the resurrection there would have been no Christian Church at all."

- II. The death of Jesus Christ was the demise of death's agony (v. 24b)

Christ used that which we feared, death, in order to destroy death. When Jesus Christ began His earthly ministry He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath in Nazareth where He had been brought up. He opened up the scroll and He read Isaiah 61:1.

Consider what He said. Jesus Christ brings "good news" to the poor. He proclaims release to the captives. He brings recovery of sight to the blind. And He sets free those who are oppressed. Where on this list do you and I fall? Are we poor? Are we held in captivity? Are we blind? Are we oppressed? Absolutely! What then does Jesus Christ bring to me in this present life?

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Jesus never promised to change my circumstances, but He has changed me and He has changed my destiny. Friend, this is hope with a capital "H". When the apostle Paul had been beaten with many blows, placed in chains, and thrown into a dark prison cell, he was able to raise up his voice and sing praises to God (Acts 16:22-25). And why was this possible? It was possible because of hope.

We must never forget that our present sufferings can never be compared with the glory that is awaiting us (Rom 8:18).

III. Death could not hold Jesus Christ (v. 24c)

Do we truly recognize the weight of the statement, "It was impossible for Him to be held in its power?" The statement shows the absolute impossibility of death holding sway over the Son of God.

Why cannot death hold Jesus Christ? Death cannot hold Jesus Christ because death bows before its Master. Death has power to hold, but it is a derived power. Death, like the devil (Job 1), and any earthly authority (Jn 19:10, 11, Rom 13:1) has a derived power. Only God is all-powerful (Mt 28:18).

"In the Eastern Church on Easter day, if two people meet, one says, 'The Lord is risen'; and the other answers, 'He is risen indeed!' A Christian is a man who never forgets that he lives and walks with a Risen Lord." (Barclay, Acts, 23)