

SM 041220 (Edited from a message previously preached on 032716)

The Most Miserable People in the World

A Resurrection Sunday Message

Text - Luke 24; 1 Corinthians 15

Congregational Reading – 1 Corinthians 15:17 - 19

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." (Luke 24:1-11)

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet

in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (1 Corinthians 15:12-20)

Transition

The Bible contends that the most miserable people in the world are the people who do not believe that Christ rose from the dead.

I have met some pretty miserable people in my time, and I am sure that you have as well.

Illustrate – Carol from Cheltenham

I am sure that there are many different reasons for misery:

Physical problems can make people miserable.

Family problems

Financial worries

Poor choices

But, according to 1 Corinthians 15:19, the most miserable people in the world are the people that only have this world. Not only do they not have the help of the Holy Spirit as they live life on this earth, they also have no hope of a future, eternal world: a world of peace, a world without pain and suffering, a world filled with the very presence of God.

Turn to Ephesians 2:1 - 13

Christians, on the other hand, have hope. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is what gives us this hope. You see, if Christ is risen from the dead, then He is who He claimed to be. If He is risen from the dead, the Scriptures are all true, including all of the promises that are contained in them pertaining to us.

1 If Christ is risen from the dead, then I know that He has the power to raise up this old dead body of mine and bring it to Heaven someday.

Because Christ rose from the dead, I know that I will rise too.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend

from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

2 If Christ is risen, then I know that any pain and suffering that I may be enduring today is only temporary.

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ... While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16, 18)

3 If Christ is risen, then I know that my life has a purpose beyond what I can see, hear, and touch on this earth.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

4 If Christ is risen, then I can tell others of this good news with confidence, and give them the same hope that I have.

Christian, if your life is miserable today, perhaps it is because you have forgotten the fact that we serve a risen Savior. The tomb is empty.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept." (1 Corinthians 15:20)

Christian, you have no right nor reason to be miserable. You serve a risen Saviour. He's alive, and so are you; and He promises eternal and everlasting life to you who have trusted Him.