

HOW GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER LINK TOGETHER DIVINE GRACE AND DIVINE JUDGMENT

Good Friday & Easter Sunday, 2018 - Easter Sunday, April 1st, 2018, 10:00 a.m. - Teaching #2039
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Acts 17:30-31 - "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, [31] because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

I said Good Friday there is an application of to the resurrection of Jesus Christ that doesn't just have to do with those who believe in Jesus Christ or honor Him as Lord. There is significance to it that has to do with everybody - **Christians** and **non-Christians** alike. It is stated in our opening text from Acts. The resurrection of Jesus Christ establishes Him as the **future judge of all of mankind** - "...he [that is, God Almighty] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Jesus Christ - God the Son - is the selected future judge of everyone who has ever lived - Christians, Jews, Muslims, atheists, agnostics, passionate or indifferent. This is established by His resurrection from the dead.

Then I said there were **two questions** I wanted to look at arising out of this tremendous statement made by the Apostle Paul: **First, why is Jesus the One to judge the world?** This is the question we considered on Good Friday. Why not one of the other members of the Trinity. Why not Father God? Why not the Holy Spirit? Why is Jesus Christ, God the Son, the One to whom judgement is committed? We studied four answers to that question and they're all on line, or soon will be.

The second question is the one we'll be drilling down into this morning. And that **second question is what is the significance of this fact?** What does it **mean** to us that God is going to judge the world by His Son, Jesus Christ? What are we all called upon to do that is **different** now that Jesus Christ is risen and designated as the judge of the whole world?

So we'll continue today from Good Friday's outline and move on to our second question:

2) IF THE RESURRECTION ESTABLISHES PUBLICLY THAT JESUS CHRIST WILL BE THE JUDGE OF THE ENTIRE WORLD, WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FACT?

I can see several things of great importance:

- a) **Because Jesus Christ is risen, the days of ignorance about how to reach God are passed.** Look again at our opening text to see how Paul makes this point perfectly clear:

Acts 17:22-30 - "So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. [23] For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. [24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, [25] nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. [26] And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, [27] that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, [28] for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring. [29] Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. [30] The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent...."

We're meant to see a contrast in **verse 30**. Paul contrasts the **"times of ignorance"** and the time **"now."** There were the times **before** the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and there is the time **now** after Christ has risen.

Notice the way Paul calls these times the **"times of ignorance"**(30). He doesn't mean the people were less intelligent. He means these were days of a more **legitimate agnosticism**. There were still evidences of God's power and might and goodness - as Romans chapter one teaches. But, our text makes clear, the days of pretending to search for an **"unknown god"**(Acts 17:23) are no longer an honest option.

Before Christ rose from the grave God judged people by the revelation they had received of Him through the outer world of creation and the inner witness of personal conscience and the creation of His Old Testament people and the giving of the law. People were still sinners because they never fully lived up to the revelation they **had** of God. Paul has already spelled all that out in those very important chapters, **Romans 1 and 2**.

But Paul says the times have been **split in two** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection creates a **"before"** and **"after"** in God's dealing with the human race. When the **stone** moved from Jesus' tomb, so did the **moral center of gravity** for the whole universe in terms of its approach to God.

God has been revealed in a way He had never been revealed before. The truth claims of Jesus Christ have all been verified and visibly substantiated. And because of all this, the **bar of judgment and responsibility has also been raised**.

That leads into the second thing we need to know about the Resurrection and its **meaning** for our lives today:

- b) ***Because Jesus is risen, these are days when all people everywhere must repent - Acts 17:30 - "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent..."***

In other words, Paul doesn't just come to these people worshiping their idols to the unknown god and say, **"Well, they're being sincere. And after all, they are searching for the true God. I guess I'll just let them be."**

No. That's not it at all. That totally misses the point Paul is making in this passage. Paul is saying that God will no longer **pass over** that kind of misguided religious expression. God is now (since Jesus Christ rose from the dead) calling **all people everywhere** to repent of their unbelief. Father God has **established proof** - He has **"given assurance"** (17:31) in Paul's words - by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

Do you see Paul's point? He's saying it is foolish and wicked to fashion a god out of wood or stone or gold or stocks or mutual funds or land when He has revealed Himself so completely and compellingly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are now days of **repentance**. These are days for **embracing the risen Christ**.

This leads us into the third and last point:

- c) ***Because Jesus Christ is now risen, these are days when people must presently reckon with His judgment over all the earth when He comes again.***

Acts 17:31 - "... because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

If we are going to be **judged** by Jesus, we must come to terms with the **authority** of Jesus. The present Lordship of Jesus is the **standard** by which all lives will be eternally measured. My devotion to Him matters more than my devotion to anything else. In other words, there is an urgent **compulsion** to allowing Jesus the right to order my life right now, regardless of the degree of inconvenience it may cause to my own self-turned will.

This is what makes the Lordship of Jesus a **compulsion**. This is what distinguishes **compulsion** from **instruction** or **information**. You can tell me how to **tie my shoes**. That's **instruction**. I may or may not listen to you, or be able to actually **tie** my shoes, depending on how bright I am. You have given me **instruction**. What I do with it is up to me.

Now let me show you a totally different **kind** of situation. The government tells me I must pay my taxes. That's **compulsion**, not **instruction**. If I **don't** pay my taxes, there will be consequences. That's because **behind** the instruction there is more than merely a **classroom**. There is an **authority** and a **judge**. The authority is what separates **law** from mere **advice**. You must **comply** with law. You are free to **ignore** advice.

So when the Bible says Jesus will **judge the world** when He comes again, it tells me something very

important about the **authority** Jesus is to have in my life **right now**. Everyone, everywhere must give proper weight to Jesus Christ because God, in His mercy has "**given assurance**"(17:31) to the entire world of the unique role Jesus Christ has as **Savior, Lord, and coming Judge of the whole earth**. He has **established** Christ's authority as Judge by **raising Him from the dead**.

You know the **event** of Easter. Here is the **meaning** of Easter for your life right now. You won't get this message from the Globe and Mail, or the Toronto Star. It's not in Macleans or Time or Newsweek. CBC, CNN and Fox News won't talk about it. But it **is** the meaning of our lives and the meaning of our times in view of the reality of Easter. **The days of ignorance are over - the day of repentance is here - Jesus will judge the world in righteousness when He comes.**

The Resurrection of our Lord means there is no opportunity for **pretending** we don't know better. It means non-repentance is culpable. Non-belief isn't just intellectual. It's divinely **judgable**. Personal accountability has increased exponentially since the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Through faith in Him, here's what I pray that judgement will entail for everyone here this Easter Sunday morning:

2 Timothy 4:8 - "...Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."