**Jesus Raised, God Revealed**

Based on [Mathew 28:1-10](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Mt28)

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Easter Day - The Resurrection of our Lord

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Two thousand years ago, in a land occupied by the Roman Empire in first century Palestine, the land of Judea, there was a man who in a very public way died a very gruesome death by crucifixion. **His lifeless body was buried in a tomb hewn out of the rock, and a stone was rolled in front of it.** At the time of his death sentence, his closest followers and friends abandoned him, and wept in shame and defeat...for, all other things being equal, dead means dead. And the only man that they'd ever seen able to raise somebody from the dead--had himself died.

Many died of crucifixion, but this man who died had claimed to be the Son of the living God. And he had done many miracles, or if you're a --skeptic, parlor tricks--but he clearly, unequivocally, irrevocably?...died. **The next day was the Sabbath, and this man rested in the tomb until Sunday, the first day of the week. And women who loved him went to see the tomb. And then, an earthquake, an angel, and guard falling like dead men.** The angel rolled away the massive stone and invited the women into the tomb and tells them to see that the one who was placed here dead....he is not here, for he is Risen. Go and tell his disciples. As they are on their way, they met their master, the man who had died, Jesus saying the same thing as the angel, "Do not be afraid, go and tell the disciples," "my brother's" he calls them.

The reason we gather here today--not only today but every first day of the week--is because of this fact...a man has risen from the dead. **No defibrillators, no smelling salt, no priests or magicians on the scene either. This man died alone, and was resurrected alone.** The dissolution of his cells reversed. The molecules reknit. The amino acids rekindled...and his body lives. Whodunnit? God done it.

Who is this God who supposedly raised Jesus from the dead? Does he even exist? Is he real? **Well trackers might not find his footprints; CSI might not find his fingerprints**; perhaps he would rather remain hidden, the quiet type maybe?

Ladies and gentlemen, the fact that there is a God is plain to all men, though some would deny it. **There are atheists, it's true, people who don't believe in a god..but you've gotta have a lot of faith to be an atheist**. You've got to fill in a lot of blanks in this life with...well, more blanks.

St. Paul says in Romans, "For what can be known about God is plain to ungodly men who *by their unrighteousness* **suppress** the truth." St. Paul says, "**What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it. For his invisible attributes..his eternal power and divine nature have been *clearly* perceived, (*clearly* perceived), since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse**."

The fool says in his heart, "**There is no God**." Clearly life is no accident, nor is the complexity and beauty of nature. Fifty years ago, it was thought that as science and technology advances, the less we will need an "all-powerful creator" to explain things. **Well we *have* advanced, and as it turns out the more technology we have available to probe into the building blocks of life, the more miraculous it appears.** Today's micro technology reveals what remained hidden fifty years ago...that a cell--the building block of life--is filled with elaborate and exquisite machinery...*programmed* machinery. And, well...a program needs a programmer, doesn't it? A machine needs a designer. Just as a house needs an architect and a builder.

Ladies and gentlemen, on your way here this morning, you drove by any number of houses. And living in southern Alberta, and Chinook city, you know that the forces of nature do a better job of removing shingles from roofs than adding them. You know that each and every house was designed and then built--not by accidental forces--but by someone, some "person" with intention and purpose.

But looking at any of these houses...does it tell you anything *about* the architect? Maybe that he's clever, even *powerful* in a way. But what does the building tell you about the character of the builder? Does he beat his wife? Does he care for his children? Is he an honest man or, pardon me...maybe he's a woman? **When looking at a house, all you know is that someone was clever enough to design it, and powerful enough to build it.** It doesn't tell you, though, if you'd enjoy the man's company, or spill your guts to him, or trust him with your kids. So it is with the God of the universe. We know he's great and clever and powerful...but is he a loving? Is he merciful?

And what's more...take a closer look at these homes. They--all of them--contain imperfections. Some of these flaws are small and hard to notice---other's are obvious. Missing shingles, paint flaking off, crack in the foundation. **Even the most immaculate home needs repairs, and won't last forever.** What does that say about the architect? Clever, but wasn't he clever enough to build perfectly? Powerful, yes but wasn't he powerful enough to build to last? Or did he design it to fail, "planned obsolescence?" A powerful and clever architect could do that, yes, but not one who has love and mercy for his creation.

So it is if we try to find God in Nature. We will see he is powerful enough to create our world, and clever enough to give us life. But what about death? **What about suffering? What about bum knees and bunyans? What about the cancer and the common cold?** What about starving babies born in third world countries and aborted babies unborn in the first world? What about evil deeds that go unpunished? What about good deeds that go unrewarded?

Ladies and gentlemen, if you try and figure God out from nature, you'll see him there, but only his backside...and you won't be very flattered by by what you see. You can put the best construction on what you see, but you're still only guessing. **So how do you know who God is?**

**Maybe you try to turn inward, not outward. Do you turn to your heart? Does your conscience tell you who this creator is?** When you do something wrong you feel guilty. That's your conscience, and it knows that you are judged by a standard of right and wrong. But who is it that's judging you? **Who is the mysterious man with the gavel?** Well, he's the very author of right and wrong, that's who.

But is that much comfort? God is a judge, it's true, but do you want to live in the presence of a judge forever? No you wouldn't. You'd rather strap on a fig-leafed loin cloth and go hide somewhere. **Yes, you have a conscience, an inner sense of right and wrong--and it *knows* that there is an eternal legislator, executor and judge of who you are and what you do.** But all you know of a judge is that he is a judge of the law...and there ain't no love in the law. God is a judge, your judge, and if you're honest with yourself, the verdict is guilty, guilty, guilty. But the character question remains unanswered. Does this judge forgive people? Does he pardon their crimes? Is he merciful or cruel? Is he loving or just...legal?

You don't know the character of an architect or a judge by looking at what they do. **There *you* must fill in the blanks and interpret him as you will. The only way to know who such a person *really is* is if they speak**--tell you who they truly are--and if they prove true to their word.

The only way you know a person's character is by their words and how well they live up to them. The God and architect of heaven and earth is a person. The God and judge of the living and the dead is a person. And if this person would want us to know anything about himself...he would have to have spoken. **Not in whispers to the heart...devils can do that. Not in good feelings...drugs can do that.** Not in a sense of personal importance...every sinful human being feels that. Not in getting lost in the mood or the music...Pink Floyd can do that. If we are to have any comfort in our lives; God would have to tell us from his own lips who his is...make to us *personal* promises in words, and be in the habit of keeping them.

Since the beginning, God has made promises to his people. When they failed he judged, but he always showed grace and mercy. **He proved himself true to his word, giving old Abraham a child of promise, delivering his people from the hands of hard-hearted pharaoh**; guiding them into the promised land; and though they continued to fall away from him, he persisted in his plan of salvation, for he was slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

If we are to know anything about God he would have had to have spoken to men. And in the history of the world, there is only one man who claimed--not just to speak for God--but to be God speaking and then prove it. This man said this of himself, "**The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be delivered into the hands of sinful men and killed and on the third day rise again**." And this Jesus of Nazareth suffered and died in the presence of many witnesses...and of course, there's nothing too miraculous about death, as such. **It's the last bit that's the proof in the pudding.** On the third day he rose again, and he appeared. He appeared--not to some-one guy praying in a cave, or to some mystic in a dream or vision. As Luke says in Acts he appeared in the body to "many witnesses who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." Dead men don't eat. Ghosts don't drink. This man once dead was alive again.

And it's because of these witnesses that we have the message today. **Christ is Risen and in that fact, God is revealed.** God is revealed to all people to be loving and merciful. **He is shown to care for his creation, and that the evil and death that we cause and suffer here is not his doing, it's ours.** But in his great mercy he did something about it. He sent his only begotten son to die for our sins, and insodoing he disabled death. SIf our God is so great why is there death and suffering in the world...well God came in the flesh to tell us why...and to do something about it.

And he taught about the sinfulness of men and the need for repentance. And he taught that he was sent by his father in heaven to save the world from their sin. **And he did many signs and wonders to show who he was and then at the last, he did and rose again to prove that what he said was true.** On Easter day we celebrate Jesus once dead--now raised, and God once hidden--now revealed to all nations as Lord and Christ and God for us. And this three-in-one who has revealed himself to be our merciful and loving God, we stand before him by faith alone forgiven of sins--until the day we stand before him Resurrected in the victory of Jesus.

Christ is Risen!