

Sermon Series: “Dying and Living in Jesus”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—4/5/2009 (Palm Sunday)
Title: “Sharing in Jesus Death and Resurrection”
Text: **Philippians 3: 7-11**
Intro.: *Illus.: Pointless Pillars*
Theme: When Jesus’ death and resurrection become more than religious talking points, but rather becomes values of our existence, is when our Christian belief has become a living faith.

My greatest gain is found in Jesus

- My net worth is not measured by the sum of my possessions
- 1. In fact, my education, wealth, position, power, and temporal priorities might be “*detrimental*” to my soul’s health
 - a. *“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mark 8:36-37*
 - b. Paul said all that “stuff” he counted as rubbish—dung (*skubala*)—for the land fill (vs. 8)
- 2. Jesus, as a religious tradition or habit in your life, is “*detrimental*” to my soul’s health
 - a. **Illus.: *Something got lost in the translation***
 - b. Sometimes, even our religious practices get in the way holding on to what is really valuable – faith in Jesus (vs. 9)
- 3. Is Jesus’ substitution and death for my sin and salvation my most valued treasure?
 - a. *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1:18-19*
 - b. What are you willing to give up in order to keep it?
- I am lost unless I am found in Jesus
- 1. **Illus.:** *I was lost but now am found was blind but now I see.” John Newton 1780 (converted slave trader)*
- 2. Some of the most together people (*from the world’s perspective*) are some of the most hopelessly lost
 - a. *You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. Revelation 3:17*
 - b. Who are you imitating: someone, some personality in the world or the One who died and rose from death?
- 3. To be found in Jesus means you look different from those around you who aren’t (**John 15: 5-11**)
 - a. **Spiritual fruitfulness** – *If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. (Vs. 5)*
 - b. **Vibrant prayer life** – *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. Vs. 7*
 - c. **Uncompromising godliness**– *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. vs 9*
 - d. **Unquenchable joy** --*I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. vs 11*

True knowledge comes from learning the power of the resurrection

- Knowing Jesus goes beyond a head knowledge of the facts of his life
- 1. *You believe that there is one God. That’s fine! The demons also believe that, and they tremble with fear. James 2:19*
- 2. Knowing the reality of Jesus’ resurrection acknowledges his death and resurrection were for salvation from **my** sin
 - a. *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Romans 4:25*
 - b. Power comes through humbleness – acknowledging Jesus and living for him and not yourself (**verse 9**)
- 3. Knowing the reality of Jesus’ resurrection means that fear of my death no longer drives my decisions
 - a. *“Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57*
 - b. Living as if nothing separates you from God’s great, full plan for your life – not afraid to risk in Jesus
- Knowing who Jesus is means participating with him in His suffering
- 1. Not afraid to lose everything –up to and including your very life— for him
- 2. Living out a powerful witness to others who follow in the example of my faith
 - a. *I am happy to suffer for you now. In my body I am completing whatever remains of Christ’s sufferings. I am doing this on behalf of his body, the church. Colossians 1:24*
 - b. *They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. Luke 21:12-13*
- 3. Counting it a high privilege to suffering alongside of Christ, my Lord and Savior
 - a. *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10*
 - b. **Illus.: Chosen in the furnace of affliction**

Pointless Pillars

Famed English architect Sir Christopher Wren designed a large dome for a church that was so unique he became the object of much criticism among his colleagues. During the construction of this dome they created so much fuss that the authorities demanded Wren add two huge supporting pillars to keep the dome from collapsing. Wren bitterly objected, insisting on the strength of his structure and the wisdom of his new architectural innovation. Besides, it would ruin the beauty and aesthetics of the church. But the opposition was well-organized and powerful. The two pillars were added to the design over Wren's objections. Fifty years passed from the construction of the controversial dome. It was not time to repaint the interior of the church, including the dome. When the painters had erected their scaffolding to begin the painting they made the startling discovery that the two added pillars did not even touch the dome. They were short by two feet. Wren had such confidence in his work that he made sure the offending pillars were freestanding. The authorities, during his lifetime, came to make their inspection from the floor, saw the pillars, and assumed they reached the roof. They now felt secure, even though the pillars were freestanding and didn't support anything. Wren went to this grave with his little secret well-kept. Many erect pillars to support their little world and keep them safe in their self-security but often they are just as useless as architect Wren's false columns.

Something Got Lost in the Translation

Lee Strobel writes, "I don't know if you've seen the new machines they've got—you can do this on the Internet—that will translate English into whatever language you want. Type in a phrase and push a button, and it will translate it into French or Spanish or German or whatever. I've always been curious: How do you know the translation is good?"

A guy had a similar question and did something fun. He took the song "**Take Me Out to the Ballgame**," typed it into the computer, and translated it into German. Then he translated it back into English to see if anything got lost in the translation. You know the song:

Take me out to the ballgame. Take me out to the crowd. Buy me some peanuts and Crackerjack. I don't care if I ever get back. Let me root, root, root for the home team. If they don't win, it's a shame. For it's one, two, three strikes you're out at the old ballgame.

He translated it into German and then back into English. Well, something got lost in the translation. It sounds a little militant, like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Execute me to the ball play. Execute me with the masses. Buy me certain groundnuts and crackerstackfusig. I'm not interested if I never receive back.

Let me root, root, root for the main team. If they do not win, it is dishonor. For there are one, two, three impacts on you at the old ball play.

Something got lost in the translation. The same is true about Jesus. Something through the centuries gets lost a bit. I don't mean the translation of the New Testament text; I'm talking about the way people perceive Jesus. Often Jesus ends up a caricature of who he really is. **Lee Strobel, Meet the Jesus I Know, (Preaching Today Audio No. 211)**

Chosen in the Furnace of Affliction

On a wall in his bedroom Charles Spurgeon had a plaque with Isaiah 48:10 on it: "I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction." "It is no mean thing to be chosen of God," he wrote. "God's choice makes chosen men choice men...We are chosen, not in the palace, but in the furnace. In the furnace, beauty is marred, fashion is destroyed, strength is melted, glory is consumed; yet here eternal love reveals its secrets, and declares its choice."

Philippians 3:7-11

⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. [NASB]

John 15:5-11

⁵"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. ⁹"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.