



WOW: Word Of the Week

Resurrection **March 31, 2021**

The cartoon caught my attention. Verbalizing and explaining cartoons is difficult because cartoons are meant to be visual. Let me try to share the picture! Use your imagination. The scene is in front of a church building. The church marquee clues us in--it is Easter Sunday. The man greeting the preacher after the Easter sermon says, "Preacher, I think you're in a rut--all I ever hear you preach about is the resurrection!"

The point is that man attends church only on Easter! He is part of what one person called the "Holly and Lily Crowd," the Christmas and Easter crowd.

It's Easter week. Next Sunday is Easter Sunday. Time to talk about, preach about the resurrection.

May I share another perspective! Perhaps the cartoon speaks to a different problem in the contemporary church. Maybe we don't preach about the resurrection enough! How many sermons never mention the resurrection? How many sermons limit references to the resurrection to a brief passing remark near the end of the sermon?

The resurrection is the hinge-pin of Christianity. Without the resurrection, Christianity fails. The power of God in the Christian life is based on the resurrection. Perhaps we need to get in a rut in our churches. Perhaps the greatest failing of the modern church is to assume the resurrection, to fail to preach the cornerstone of the gospel.

Have you noticed that the messages preached in the book of Acts were about the resurrection? Here is a short list: Acts 2:24, 36; 3:36; 4:2, 33; 5:31; 7:56; 10:40; 13:30; 17:31, 32; 23:6; 26:23. The resurrection is part of the message of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). In many passages in Acts, even when there is no direct reference to the resurrection, the resurrection was obviously included in the preaching of the word of God (Acts 7, 8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 28).

That which distinguishes Christianity from all other world religions is the resurrection of Jesus. A characteristic of deity is immortality. Immortal God has power over death. In most religions that power is evidenced by the fact that gods do not die. In Christianity, that power is evidenced in that God has power over death even when death has occurred. The power of God is not only to avoid death, but also to reverse death. Jesus' power over death is magnificently displayed in his resurrection.

The validity of Christianity hinges on the resurrection of Jesus. Further, the resurrection of Jesus is the firstfruits and promise of the resurrection of Jesus' followers. The importance of the resurrection is seen in the fact that the early church celebrated the death and coming of Jesus every Sunday in sharing the Supper.

This year, let us preach and hear the message of the resurrection! Preachers, don't let a single message be the end. Preach about the resurrection continually. Preach the gospel; preach the resurrection. Preach about Jesus; preach the resurrection. Without the preaching of the resurrection, Christianity is no more than a competing system of morality and self-improvement among many religious systems. Resurrection! Know the distinctive, emphasize the distinctive. Only Jesus can give us power over death!