

“GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

April 20, 2025, 10:30 AM

Scripture Texts: Romans 10:8-13

Prayer: Holy Father, glorify your Son in our hearts and minds through the proclamation of your Holy Word. Preach the truth of the Gospel to our hearts. Grant us a fresh vision of your glory. And merciful Father, grant to me now thought and expression that is worthy of the clarity and excellency of your Word. In the name of Jesus our risen Savior and Lord. Amen.

Introduction.

We all like stories of a good vindication, stories of good triumphing over evil, stories of great wrongs being righted, accusations of guilt proven false. The triumph of truth and justice.

For a couple of months now we have been missing a set of keys for our van. That is the vehicle Phama drives the most, and this has happened before. So I had been gently encouraging her to search some more, check coat pockets, purses, wherever. Last week I found the keys in the bottom of my computer bag. She enjoyed a sweet vindication. We love a good vindication.

History recounts some great vindications. Sadly for Galileo, his vindication didn't come until 350 years after his death. In the 1600s the Catholic Church declared him a heretic for saying the sun was the center of the solar system, contradicting the earth-centric teachings of the church. In 1992 the Catholic Church formally acknowledged its error and vindicated Galileo.

More recently Nelson Mandela had been imprisoned for 27 years for opposing apartheid in South Africa. In 1990 he was released, and four years later became South Africa's first Black president and received global acclaim as a peacemaker and unifying leader.

The Bible is full of great stories of vindication. Joseph was vindicated before his brothers for those grand dreams he told them as a young boy. He went from the status of the favored son to that of a slave, to that of prime minister of all Egypt, who would save his people.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were vindicated when God spared them in the fiery furnace. Daniel was vindicated when God shut up the mouths of the lions. His accusers were punished, and the king glorified God.

Of course all of these stories and every other example in human history pale in significance to the greatest vindication of all, the ultimate vindication when God raised Jesus from the dead.

Romans 10:9, believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.

Let's focus on the words *raised from the dead*. Why was Jesus dead? How did He die, who killed Him? From the four Gospel accounts we learn there are two answers to the question.

The Romans killed Jesus. Palestine was under Roman rule, they were the law, they alone had the authority to administer the death penalty.

By the Romans Jesus was condemned for sedition, charged with leading a rebellion and inciting the people. He was charged with treason against Rome claiming He was king. He was falsely accused of saying people shouldn't pay taxes to Caesar (Luke 23:2-5).

We know from the Gospel histories Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of province of Judaea who held a trial, and it was Pilate who delivered Jesus over to Roman executioners to be crucified on a Roman instrument of torture and death, on a Roman cross.

We know from the Gospel histories that the Jews had an active hand in killing Jesus.

By the Jews Jesus was condemned for violating the Law of Moses, for numerous infractions, including violating the Sabbath.

He was charged with lies, and threats against the Temple saying He would tear it down and rebuild it in three days.

When Jesus forgave a man his sins, they said it was blasphemy, since only God can do that.

He was condemned of blasphemy for saying He was the Christ, the Son of God.

Why was Jesus dead? Because He was condemned by the Jewish leaders and the Roman empire, who conspired to kill Him.

But what happened? He was raised from the dead.

“Up from the grave He arose.” Yes, and amen. But, no actually, that’s not strong enough. The resurrection is not “the tomb opened up and Jesus walked out.”

No, ***God raised Jesus from the dead!*** The one and only true, living God raised Jesus from the dead. What more are we saying when we say God raised Jesus from the dead? Do you grasp the full power and significance of that?

God openly defied the Roman Empire; God openly defied the Jewish authorities and Jewish nation. God contradicted the Romans and the Jews. God made fools of the Romans and made fools of the Jews.

God overruled governments and nations, the most powerful empire on earth. God shattered all the human powers and principalities and authorities.

Colossians 2:15 [God] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in [Christ].

“Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o’er His foes.”

Psalms 2:1-6 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

3 “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,

6 “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

Do you feel the intensity of this, the power of God who laughs at all human power and all human institutions? China, Russia, Israel, the United States, all a drop in a bucket, as nothing to Him.

Finally, God openly defied all the cosmic principalities and powers in the heavenly realms, by defeating sin, death and Satan and hell through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

I Corinthians 15:54-57 “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Vindicated.

God vindicated His Son when He raised Him from the dead.

The word vindicate means to prove that someone who is accused of a crime, of some blame or guilt, is innocent, is right, is free from all accusations, blame or guilt. Exonerated, cleared.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, it was God's declaration of innocence. All the accusations and the unjust verdict and His execution were a travesty of justice, completely wrong. The resurrection vindicated Jesus' righteousness and everyone of Jesus' claims, He was the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the world.

The resurrection proved God was satisfied with the propitiatory/atoning sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for the sins of the whole world. The resurrection also vindicated God, so that He is seen as just in punishing sin and justified in forgiving and justifying ungodly sinners (Rom. 4:5).

The resurrection is God's ultimate affirmation of Christ's mission and work on earth. His resurrection proves all His words are true, everything He said must be taken to heart.

God vindicated His Son as King over a kingdom. They said Jesus has an imposter, a fraud, that He wasn't a king. God vindicated Him, proving He was the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Philippians 2:9-11 *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,* 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

God vindicated Him; God honored Him; God exalted Him. God raised Him up and He is now seated in the heavenly place at the right hand of the Father in glory, where He is worshiped and praise.

God raised Jesus from the dead, and vindicated Him before all the earth for all time.

Believe in your heart and you will be saved.

Will you be saved? Do you want to be saved? What do you want to be saved from? If you could make a list of things you would like to be saved from, what would you include?

Saved from sickness, from cancer, from Alzheimer's, from serious injury.
Saved from financial struggles, from losing a job, from poverty.
Saved from lying media or lying politicians. Saved from ignorance.
Saved from vaccinations, from fluoride in your water, or from those trying to remove it.
Saved from water rights litigation. From draconian regulations and policies and mandates.
Saved from government intervention, or interference or tyranny.
Saved from Olympia or Washington DC.

What do you lay in bed at night worried about or frustrated about? What do you want to be saved from? In your daily conversations what do people talk about most that reveal what they want most, or want to be saved from most?

Who wants to be saved from sin? Seriously who thinks more about that than all those other things? Do we lie awake grieving what politicians are doing, or do we lie awake grieving what we have done, our own sin?

Who of us prays like David?

Psalm 6:6 I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.

Psalm 25:17-18 The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.
18 Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.

Psalm 51:3-4, 17 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Acts 2:36-38 "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "**Brothers, what shall we do?**" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Why were they so frightened, so scared? Why were they cut to heart? They were convicted by the Holy Spirit of their sin. It wasn't just the Romans and the Jews who killed Jesus. It was them, it was us and our sin. We rebelled, we rejected, we silenced, we ignored, we killed Him in our minds and hearts.

God defied us and our sin when He raised Jesus from the dead. What do we owe to the one we killed and God raised?

Acts 16:30-31 Then he brought them out and said, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*”
31 And they said, “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*”

Do you want to be saved from your sin more than anything else? God raised Jesus from the dead to vindicate Him as the only one who can save us from sin, death and Satan. There is no other name on earth by which you can be saved. There is only one person who God has raised from the dead, with the power to defeat sin and death, and Satan.

God says if you believe He raised Jesus from the dead you will be saved. Not *might* be saved, not *could* be saved, will be saved. There is nothing tentative about it. It is as real as the resurrection. God in his mercy and grace looks at us and says if you confess Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved.

From this resurrection flows our forgiveness, our being made new in Christ by the Spirit, and our hope of eternal life. Those who believe in Jesus are united to Him in his death and resurrection and share in His vindication. On the Day of Judgment when Satan accuses us before the Father, God will vindicate us by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

If you believe it with all your heart, and believe all that it means and implies, you will be utterly, completely, absolutely, finally saved. You will never die.

Romans 10:12, bestowing His riches on all who call on him.

If salvation from sin isn't enough, God promises to bestow on all who believe in Christ, abundant riches, all the riches of Christ.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us *all things*?

What are those riches He so lavishly pours out? Can you name them, you count them? Remember all the spiritual blessings that once belonged to the Jews? Ours are all of those and so many more.

Yes, we have the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, we have the Law and the covenant, we have all the promises of God. And we also have the revelation of the mysteries of God in Christ Jesus, we have forgiveness of sin and redemption by His blood. We have

freedom from guilt and shame. We have justification and righteousness from Christ. We have the riches of God's grace in kindness to us in Christ.

We have the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to say Abba Father. We have the intercession of Jesus and the Spirit. We have eternal salvation from eternal death, and an eternal inheritance. We have the same power at work in us that raised Jesus from the dead. We have the gift of knowing Christ, and seeing the glory of God.

In Paul's letters he refers to these gifts as lavish, immeasurable, incomprehensible, unfathomable, too deep to measure, more than we can ask or imagine. These riches aren't the fleeting, temporal stuff of this life, these are the riches we need most, that satisfy our hearts and souls most deeply.

Believe in your heart and rest on His resurrection. By His resurrection and vindication, we will receive our own resurrection and vindication.

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in the vindication of His Son. Christ is risen!

Prayer: Holy Father, you have destroyed the last enemy death, you have defeated Satan, you have vanquished hell, you have raised to life your Son. Enable us, to live in the light and truth and promise of the resurrection. Reorder and reorient our lives around this one central truth, the reality of Jesus' final and decisive triumph over death. Increase in us your resurrection power, strengthen us for the battles ahead. Make this reality practical in all our daily lives, in all our daily interactions and relationships and conversations, to the glory of Jesus Christ, in whose mighty name we pray, Amen.