



Series: Death and Resurrection

Sermon: Introduction & Overview

Text: Luke 24.5b-8

Mercy Northeast Update

We said in our vision series in January that we want to be a maturing, multiplying, multicultural church. In the spirit of “multiplying” I want to update you about our progress in launching a campus of Mercy Church in Northeast Charlotte. To facilitate gospel multiplication, we want to multiply everything about our ministry here. It means some of ya’ll are going to become community group leaders as we multiply community groups. Maybe you will join kids ministry or student ministry as we multiply classrooms and groups for them. We also believe a way to multiply the gospel is through planting new churches. And so we’ve committed to plant at least two churches in the next five years and I will tell you I believe we will plant more than that, sooner than that. Depending on the people God raises up & his calling on them, that will be here in Charlotte, somewhere in North America, or somewhere around the world. In all of these ways, being a part of Mercy means being a part of a sending church.

it’s in that spirit of reaching people, multiplying the gospel,

that we intend to launch a campus of Mercy Church in Northeast Charlotte. We believe this will facilitate gospel multiplication at UNCC and among all Mercy members living up there. And truthfully it already has. I know several of you who’ve started making the drive because you heard we will be coming your way soon. I’m excited! Now this will be Mercy Church. And the location we currently meet in on Providence Rd will be one of two gatherings of Mercy Church. One church, two gatherings. We will have Pastors responsible for shepherding each of these gatherings. So I encourage you to pray about which gathering the Lord would have you step in and belong to.

Now, we intend to have a public launch of our Northeast Campus on Easter weekend. So start telling your friends. I’m bringing this up THIS weekend because our launch team is going to begin worshipping together in Northeast Charlotte starting Next Weekend. I will be up there preaching, some of our worship team will be leading. They will be gathering in the evenings for worship & for training so you won’t see most of them here at Providence Rd on Sunday Mornings. Which means two things.

1. some of you need to step off the sidelines and into ministry here. Because we are sending some of our most faithful and committed people to this work. That is going to leave a hole here. And I believe God is calling some of you to step up and say OK, what can I do? Here I am Lord, send me! In fact, for all of us that needs to be a community group question this week. Where can I step up and serve?

2. Secondly though, we need to pray over our Northeast Launch Team. Gonna ask Pastor Rashard to come up here. He is our Campus Pastor for Mercy Northeast. He will be overseeing Mercy Northeast so if you want to join the launch team effort...connect up with him. There are a few other staff at Mercy that are going out. I'm going to bring them up as well because you know them and love them. And if you are at Providence Rd next week I don't want you to think the rapture happened & you missed it.

If you are a part of that launch team, I want you to stand up. And I want us to pray over you. If you are online but you are going to be a part of that team, stand up in your living room or on your bed or whatever.

PRAY. Mercy – it's time for the mercy cheer. "YOU ARE SENT"

SERMON INTRO

We are beginning a new series of sermons this week that will take us up to Easter Weekend. From now until Easter weekend we will follow the path of Jesus from the upper room with his disciples where he ate the last supper all the way to the empty tomb. To do that we will be in the final 3 chapters of Luke's gospel. Luke 22-24. The title of our series is: Death and Resurrection. We opened the year looking at who we are going to be as a church. And our first and most central value we said was that we keep the gospel at the center of all we do. So, we are going to spend some time with Jesus. And as we do, we are going to talk about Why Jesus had to die.

Here's why this matters – When it comes to the Christian faith there are at the most basic level two groups - those who believe the gospel and those who don't. Everyone's spot on the road of belief is a little different, I know that. But there is a clear dividing line between belief and unbelief. SO I want to speak to believers, and unbelievers in this message and in throughout this series.

- **Unbelievers** – Psalm 34.8 says **taste and see** that the Lord is Good. Happy is the person who takes refuge in him. My hope is that you will take God up on his offer to you. Come as you are -
 - If you are a full out skeptic looking to dismantle this silly faith – taste and see for yourself
 - If you are a genuine seeker, bring your questions and your doubts – taste and see for yourself that the Lord is good.
 - If you feel like a wayward soul finding your way back to God – taste and see...
 - This series is not a defensive challenge, it's an offer. An invitation. Taste and see that the Lord is good.
- My hope for you in this series is that things get personal for you. That you see **your** need for the death and resurrection of Jesus. I hope you see why it's not just an interesting subject of history, but a matter of personal importance for you. I recognize we live in a post Christian context where it may seem like your life does not require Jesus for really anything. But at the same time, you probably sense a need for some greater meaning to the world and to your life. My hope

is to show you why what you believe about the death and resurrection of Jesus is a matter of far greater importance than you've ever known. I want you to meet the real Jesus. The Jesus of the Bible. And see that he is good. His love for you is real and it is good. From now until Easter on April 4 – taste and see that the Lord is good. [Would love an action step here. Ex: Q&A after each service?]

- **Believer** – My hope for you in this series is for you to gain a deepened Love for the God of the gospel. That by the time Easter comes around you will have a greater awareness of your personal need, of the necessity, of the very events you are reading about and that you are hearing sermons about and that you are singing songs about. That your devotion to Christ will grow because your understanding of your need for him grows and your thankfulness of his glorious love for you grows. I also want you to be able to speak about the need for the gospel with fellow believers and with unbelievers. We said 2 weeks ago we want 2021 gospel conversations in 2021. I am asking that God would stir both joy and urgency in your heart for the need for Jesus. I want the necessity of Jesus to RISE to the surface in your life. If it does, repentance will rise and joy will rise with it. And we will be a better church for it.

There's this spot at the end of Luke, in chapter 24, where the necessity of Jesus' death and resurrection come up. **Luke 24.5-8.**

And as we walk forward towards the resurrection I want to begin right near the end. I want to show you where we are heading because it helps inform everything you will see happen. On the morning of Jesus' resurrection some women who were followers of Jesus went to his tomb to perform a common burial ritual. The stone is rolled away and the tomb is empty. All of the sudden two angels appear and the women are scared. Then these angels recall Jesus' own words and basically say Don't you remember?

"Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" asked the men. 6 "He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'" 8 And they remembered his words. -- Luke 24:5-8

Don't you remember? Basically – nothing about this should be a surprise to you. He did exactly what he said WAS NECESSARY. Of Course the angels are referencing Jesus' words recorded in Luke 9.22

22 "It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day." -- Luke 9:22

It's necessary. And this NECESSITY...this is at the core of our faith. It's the reason, or reasons, for the death & resurrection of Jesus that reveal both the power and beauty of Christianity. I want to show you today why it was necessary for Jesus to die.

Then, as we go into each scene over the course of the next several weeks I want us to remember why. Why the last supper? Why suffer the betrayal of Judas and of Peter? Why suffer the humiliating trial with Barabbas? Why suffer the humiliating gruesome death on the cross? You are God. Why would you submit yourself to that?

Today I want to show you why it was necessary for Jesus to die & rise again. I'm going to give you an overview of Luke 22-24. Of the passages we'll spend the next several weeks in. And I want to show you _____ reasons he had to die & rise again.

I do this as a way of preparing you, of whetting your appetite, for the feasts that will come as we journey to the cross.¹

Now before I go further I have to remind you that this is not an academic exercise. Some of you, in your search for knowledge, could ignore or downplay the holiness of the death and resurrection of Jesus. But God doesn't owe you answers. He doesn't owe you anything. Yet in his kindness, he does reveal some of his purposes in a way you and I can comprehend them. He says we can approach the throne of grace to find help, Hebrews 4.16. But it is still a THRONE. And he reigns on it. So yes, investigate it. Search for answers. But do so with a humble, open heart and mind. Taste and See that the LORD GOD ON HIGH is good. And Christian, I encourage you these weeks leading up to Easter to let it be spent in awe

¹ John Piper's 50 Reasons why Jesus came to die helped me see the multi-faceted need for the cross. I found his book to be a springboard into the beautiful depths of the gospel. I try to cite him where I directly use his

and wonder. Repentance & faith. Ask God to let you SEE more of him.

Ok if you are taking notes – 7 reasons why the death and resurrection of Jesus were necessary.

Why Jesus had to die

1. To bring us into fellowship with God

Next week we will look at the scene in the upper room called the last supper. Where we will see Jesus institute a sacred meal with his followers that is to be the symbolic reminder of his death. As Jesus sits around the table look what he does:

19 And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. -- Luke 22:19-20

The new covenant. Covenant is the language of how God defines his relationship with people. It's amazing to me that from the opening pages of scripture it is clear that God *wants* to be with his creation. He created us to be in fellowship with him. No other religion can offer such rich meaning to life. Our purpose is to KNOW GOD and WALK WITH HIM. Present tense. Here and now. Psalm 23 says you prepare a TABLE for me in the presence of my enemies. That's God laying out a table for

words of course, but after our Lord, Dr. Piper should get credit for anything good in this sermon.

us to pull up to. And to talk with him. The meal table shows up throughout scripture as the depiction of relationship. A family feast. A wedding banquet. You want to get to know somebody...you have meals with them. You want to know God, sit down at his table.

The other night there was a thunderstorm while we were eating dinner. And I thought...this is Psalm 23. It's not just that we are surviving the storm, we are laughing and telling stories during the storm. This is what we need with God. We need it. We were meant for it.

This is what Jesus is calling us back to, together in the communion meal. There was an old covenant between man & God. That if man obeyed God's law, he would remain at the table. But we rejected it.

The commandment that was meant for life resulted in death for me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me. Romans 7:10-11

In other words, instead of obeying God's law...the sin in me saw the law and Disobeyed it. Breaking fellowship between God and I. Of our own volition we left the table. And so this meal with the disciples is powerful imagery because Jesus is saying, God has made a way for us to sit back down with him at the table. And that way...is himself. You can have fellowship with God that you are created for. Salvation is not good news if it only saves us from hell. It also saves us TO GOD. Jesus made a way to the table! That's why we need him. We can't get to the table without him. But through him...John 14.6 we

can get to the one table we were meant for. Jesus had to die to bring us to God's table.

Why Jesus had to die 2. To eradicate our pride

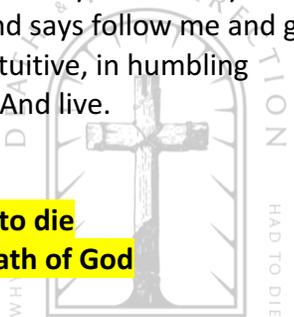
Right after the meal, the most absurd argument in the history of dumb arguments arises between the disciples. Of all the dumb arguments you've ever seen...none of them win the gold medal. Because the dumbest of all is this one in scripture right here. Luke says

24 Then a dispute also arose among them about who should be considered the greatest. 25 But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them have themselves called 'Benefactors.' 26 It is not to be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you should become like the youngest, and whoever leads, like the one serving. 27 For who is greater, the one at the table or the one serving? Isn't it the one at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. -- Luke 22:25-27

Nothing keeps us from seeing ourselves rightly, from seeing others rightly, or from knowing God rightly...like our own pride. These guys are at the table with Jesus, the living God, and they are arguing about who is the greatest. Like if you and your friends are playing football & Tom Brady is the QB...and ya'll start arguing about who the best WR is. Doesn't matter.

You are all irrelevant. Tom freakin' Brady is here. Everybody else is really inconsequential to what happens.

Jesus explains that as long as they are after their own greatness...they will never see the greatness of God. You can't build your kingdom and God's kingdom at the same time. Maybe the biggest thing in the way of you seeing God...is YOU. You don't think you need God because you got YOU. You are consumed by YOU. And the problem is that nothing will ever be enough for YOU. (greatest showman. Truest awfulest song ever). You are a terrible God. You are demanding and yet never satisfied. So Jesus comes to set you free from you. And does so by being a king who serves and says follow me. Don't live for yourself, die to yourself. And then you will truly live. The perfect one humbles himself. And says follow me and go low. And though it seems counter intuitive, in humbling yourself you can be free to see him. And live.



Why Jesus had to die
3. To absorb the wrath of God

In two weeks we will follow Jesus into the garden of gethsemane. And there you will hear him cry out to God the father

42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me — nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." -- Luke 22:42 (CSB)

² John 18.11; Isaiah 51.22; Jeremiah 49.12; Matthew 20.22; 26.39,42; Mark 14.36

The cup²...is a reference to Isaiah 51 where God calls it the cup of staggering...the cup of his fury. Jeremiah 49 calls it the cup of his punishment for disobeying him. See what we fail to see or feel so often in this life is how egregious our sin really is. God is holy and our sin is open rejection of his love and defiance of his authority. John Piper says it this way

*"...failure to love him is not trivial - it is treason... Since God is just, he doesn't sweep these crimes under the rug of the universe. He feels a holy wrath against them... Not to punish would be unjust. The demeaning of God would be endorsed. Therefore God sends his own Son to absorb his wrath."*³

I know this idea of the wrath of God doesn't get a warm greeting in a society steeped in the pursuit of warm fuzzy feelings. But unless you see your sin as deserving of God's holy wrath...you will never sense a true need for Jesus. You might tip your hat to him, but you will never worship him. He has taken the cup of God's fury and willingly drank it all for us.

Why Jesus had to die
4. To take away our shame

In a very tragic, relatable moment we are going to see Peter deny any relationship with Jesus. It is a moment Jesus predicts in that upper room. Peter, you will deny me. But he also says to him

³ Piper, 50 reasons why Jesus came to die (p 20).

And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” -- Luke 22:32

When you have turned back. Jesus doesn't just predict that Peter will deny him...he predicts a future beyond his denial. A returning to God and a ministry that will come with it. And there right after Peter denies Jesus, and the rooster crows, Luke says as Jesus is being shuffled off in chains...Jesus looked at Peter. And Peter broke down. Lost it. Felt the weight of his sin. Jesus' words were fulfilled. And something changed in Peter right there. We see a different Peter from then on. Still imperfect yes, but devoted to the Lord. Jesus didn't leave him in his shame. No, Jesus took his shame so that Peter COULD turn back and carry out the purpose the Lord had for him.

See the product of GUILT...the guilt of our sin...is the feeling of shame. The purpose of that shame is to lead you to repentance of the sin. And to see Christ in shackles being led off to carry the guilt of our sin. And in the great news of the gospel, he takes my guilt & shame & I take his righteousness. Then he puts those things to death. He rises, and sits at the father saying as far as the east is from the west that is how far my sin is from me. He is not burdened by the shame of sin in heaven. ITS GONE! And just as its gone from him, its gone from me.

And to you Christian who has betrayed your Lord...Christ has taken your shame with him to the cross and buried it in the

⁴ Comment from a post by Tim Challies called "The Guilt and Shame" posted 9.7.2015. <https://www.challies.com/articles/the-guilt-and-the-shame/>

grave. It's gone. Carry the shame of your sin no more. There is a song we sing sometimes with powerful lyrics called "before the throne of God above."

**When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,**

Here is Satan, actively drawing old sins to mind, and convincing me that I still bear the guilt and shame of each one of them.⁴ But...

**Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.**

Jesus died to take away our shame.

Why Jesus had to die 5. To show the wealth of God's grace toward sinners⁵

We will see Jesus go through three different trials. Escalating in humiliation, ending with an angry mob crying out Crucify Him! Everyone in the scene is guilty except Jesus. Pilate and Herod are guilty of letting an innocent man suffer. Choosing self-preservation over righteousness. Barrabas is guilty of murder. The crowd is guilty of bloodlust. And Jesus, the one innocent among them, is the one sentenced to a criminal's

⁵ Header Wording & "2 things" taken from Piper's 50 reasons.

punishment. And in all of this we are meant to see two things about God's love. First is the lengths he is willing to go to sacrifice himself for us. Second is the degree of unworthiness we had when he saved us. His grace really is amazing. He saved a WRETCH like me. Our sin runs deep but his love runs deeper still. You cannot sin to a depth that his grace cannot reach you.

Who needs to receive that today? He loves even you.

Why Jesus had to die

6. To fulfill God's promise to heal sinners

There is this well-known passage in the OT book of Isaiah which talks in very specific detail about the suffering servant who would one day come to bear the punishment for the sins of the world. And at virtually every step of Jesus' passion account he is fulfilling God's promise from Isaiah. And there is one promise that has become very powerful to me. It's right at the heart of the prophecy in Isaiah.

5 But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. -- Isaiah 53:5 (CSB)

We are healed by his wounds. See the death of Jesus was more than just a transfer of your guilt to him. It was a transfer of his LIFE to yours. His life giving blood flows down from the

⁶ The "blood flows out to us" concept comes from Ray Ortlund's Isaiah commentary (Crossway Wheaton, Ill, 2005) 358.

cross...but it doesn't just pool up there. It's power flows out to you and I. Look at him. By faith in him you can answer his call "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden...and I will give you rest. (Matt 11.28)." His blood flows to the man held in bondage to lust who knows there is no real comfort there, only empty-ness and self-hatred.⁶ But the blood of Jesus flows out to that man and cleanses him entirely. It gives him new life. It flows out to all people taking from them their guilt, their shame, their loss, their tears and despair, and gives them healing! Receive his love for you today. Let his wounds begin to heal you.

Why Jesus had to die

7. To rise in victory over death

There is no question what the tone of Easter Sunday will be like at Mercy Church. We will CELEBRATE. Why? Because king Jesus got out of the grave! And if I attach myself to his death...If I believe he died for me, then I attach myself to his resurrection. And I believe I have victory over death. So I can sing with the new testament church in Corinth

54 When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

Death has been swallowed up in victory.

55 Where, death, is your victory?

Where, death, 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! -- 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

So, taste and see that the Lord is good. I am praying for you,
that by Easter you might be ready to shout with the
Corinthians past and with some fellow Charlotteans present,
THANKS BE TO GOD who gives us victory through our Lord
Jesus Christ.

PRAY

Communion

