

**Scripture Reading:** *[Luke has rejoined Paul as he and other disciples journey to Jerusalem]*

**Acts 20:5** “5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. 7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. 9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.”

## **The Greater Works of Jesus**

The passage before us this morning provides additional insights into how the Apostle Paul ministered to the churches that he had planted!

➤ It could certainly be one of the favorites for preachers!

-- It is the **ONLY** passage that we have in the Bible that directly speaks about the length of a sermon!

-- It also shows a pretty dramatic result from the preaching with a young man raised from the dead!

➤ Actually this passage about Paul’s visit to Troas can in fact teach us about the importance of preaching, the importance of worship **AND** the power of the Gospel!

The Apostle Paul’s journey brings him back to Troas where he stays for seven days. Troas is where he first joined with Dr. Luke and saw the vision of the man from Macedonia calling for his help. We know from II Corinthians that Paul later had an open door to preach the Gospel in Troas.

Luke tells us the Saints gathered for worship on the first day of the week: Sunday, the day that our Lord rose from the dead in His victory over sin! We saw this practice begin in John’s Gospel as the Disciples met with Jesus on Sunday, John himself worshipped on Sunday in the Book of Revelation and the Apostle Paul encouraged the Church at Corinth to take up the collections for the Jerusalem Saints as they gathered on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.

➤ Thus throughout its history the Church has gathered for worship on the Lord’s day, Sunday, the first day of the week focusing on the completed work of Jesus and the power of His resurrection!

This gathering was in the evening because the pagan world knew little of a seven day week with a day of rest!

➤ Sadly, **WE** take this blessing of Christian civilization for granted forgetting that it has not been widely practiced until recent times!

While I can joke about the length of Paul’s message, we do need to appreciate the dedication of these Saints who would have labored all day & likely had to work the next day!

We have a culture that still sees Sunday as a day of rest and yet we allow so many distractions to keep us from even weekly worship services.

➤ Pastor Tuuri covered this extensively in his recent messages and I would commend them to any who have not listened to them.

Not only is Luke reminding us that we should have a heart that desires to be instructed by God's Word and to participate in worship...

- But I believe that he is reminding us about the power of God's Word and worship as well.

Luke gives us no details about what Paul teaches that night but he certainly tells us about a dramatic occurrence. We can point someone to the Epistles of Paul if they desire to learn about what Paul would have taught these young Saints...

- BUT we struggle to know what to do with this miracle!

We have learned, that the Holy Spirit used miracles to confirm the authority of those who took the Gospel to the Jews & to the Gentiles, including resurrections. There were several resurrections in the ministry of Jesus, and we have three in the OT: The man who was resurrected after being placed in Elisha's tomb & both Elisha & Elijah resurrecting boys in a manner very similar to the actions of the Apostle Paul here at Troas.

In I Kings we see the Prophet Elijah praying for the widow's son who had died: "21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto Jehovah and said, O Jehovah my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. 22 And Jehovah heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."

We see a similar situation when Elisha restores life to the son of the Shunammite woman in II Kings chapter four: 32 "When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. 33 He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to Jehovah. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. 35 He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. "

- So what do we make of all these accounts of resurrections that we find in the Scriptures?

Just as we struggle to appreciate the blessing of having the Lord's Day set aside as a day of rest in our culture, so we struggle to remember the blessings that have been brought by the Gospel!

- These examples that we have in the pages of Scripture remind us that God's great plan of salvation revolves around resurrection power.

When Adam fell into sin in the Garden the punishment was death: "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die." As Mike ably pointed out in our study of Romans on Wednesday night, his death resulted in the death of the entire human race: All of us are born dead in our trespasses and sins and we all ultimately face physical death as a result of Adam's sin and our own.

When God promised Adam and Eve that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent He knew that the cost would be great for Jesus who would have to come as a man to save man, bearing the full wrath of God against man's sin.

- The proof that the penalty for sin had been satisfied in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus was His eternal resurrection!

Because of the power of Christ's work the Bible speaks of two resurrections for men:

- The first resurrection comes when God brings new life to His people!

When He replaces their hearts of stone with hearts of flesh. When we are born again as Jesus explained to Nicodemus.

The first resurrection is fully explained by John in Revelation chapter 20:

**“4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”**

- Here we see what Jesus described as the wheat and the tares growing up together in the master’s field.

At the end of age we see the second resurrection which is the physical resurrection of all who have lived to come before the Great White Throne judgment. So I want to argue that these examples of resurrections do show us the power of God’s Word and worship:

- As sinners are brought back to life in the first resurrection
- And as we are reminded that God will ultimately raise all who have lived for judgment.

In fact, I want to argue that ALL of the miraculous occurrences that we see in the Scriptures work in this way. As Jesus gave His final teachings to His disciples before going to the cross, he said this in John chapter 14: *[reading a long section so we have context]*

**1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know." 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. 7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. 12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. 15 If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”**

- Obviously that passage could command an entire series of sermons, but I want us to notice that Jesus tells us that we, as His disciples, will do greater works than He did!
- What does this mean?

What were the works of Jesus?

- He fed the hungry.
- He healed the sick.
- He cast out demons.
- He raised the dead.

As we pondered a few weeks ago, these are pictures of future glory where we will feast at the Lamb's Supper, where all of our infirmities will be healed, where Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire and we will all be raised up with glorified bodies & death will be NO more!

- **BUT, we must not forget that they also are of foretaste of what Jesus told His disciples would happen as they carried out the Great Commission!**

The five thousand that Jesus fed with the loaves and fishes grew hungry again in their lifetimes.

Those who Jesus healed and raised from the dead ultimately faced physical death, as do we all.

Even those for whom he cast out demons were at risk of having those demons return with wicked friends.

So why did Jesus tell the disciples that they would do greater works if we know that even these miraculous works fall short until Jesus returns to defeat the final enemy death?

- **Shouldn't our focus be on the first resurrection, striving to get people saved?**

This is certainly what much of the modern American church would tell us and where their priorities lay today. The only problem is that it undermines the very Great Commission that Jesus gave AND the reality of history! The Great Commission does not merely say, go and save as many as you can before the end so they can go to heaven!

- **The Great Commission says that we are to disciple the nations, giving people the name of God in baptism and teaching them to obey ALL that Jesus taught!**

So yes, we are to preach the Gospel, call people to repentance, and baptize those who repent and trust in Jesus! But many fail to notice that this great truth is sandwiched in-between the call to disciples the nations and to teach those converts how to live the abundant life Jesus gave us!

- **In the passage we read from John, Jesus carefully intertwines the call to do greater works with His call to keep His commandments.**
- **All in the power of the Spirit!**

He is teaching His disciples, and all of us the fact that there will be very significant impacts in the world as the Spirit fills the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus IN HISTORY. WE continue to demonstrate the power of the Gospel in the same way as Jesus...

Remembering we will always have poor among us; remembering that there will be some demonic power until Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire and knowing that ALL will grow sick or be injured and face physical death until Jesus returns to destroy that final enemy once & for all.

- **In fact, Jesus said we would do greater works than He did!**

Since I don't think we will find evil more powerful than demons, healings more dramatic than what Jesus did nor a problem greater for the individual than death, just what does that mean?

What Jesus means is that as His people are faithful and follow His commands in the power of the Spirit you will see a broader and more powerful demonstration of these very things:

- **The works we saw Jesus doing!**
- **Here is where that problem of fish trying to realize what being wet means returns to haunt us.**
- **I would contend that we are in the midst of so much of the fulfillment of that promise from Jesus that it is hard for us to see the evidence that surround us!**

**We all respond with great emotion when we see those pictures of starving children and it reminds us that we still have too much hunger in this world. However, when was the last time that you pondered how many children are being fed today because of the advancements that have come from nations impacted by the Gospel in the past two thousand years? As late as the 1960's many predicted that we would have massive world-wide famines if the world population reached three billion people.**

- **Today we have over six billion people in the world and fewer starving than we had fifty years ago!**

**Jesus fed the five thousand with a very small amount of food and today we have yields from acres that could not have been imagined even a hundred years ago.**

- **The Gospel has brought forth greater works.**

**As we have discussed in the past, we can see the United States as a good example of what can happen with demonic activity...**

**IF we have eyes to see!**

- **Such activity was almost driven completely from our shores when the Gospel reigned in our land.**

**Jesus cast out a few demons, but now the Gospel can assault the very gates of hell!**

- **The Gospel has brought forth greater works.**

**And perhaps the clearest example of doing even greater works than Jesus comes when we consider sickness and death. Jesus restored sight, healed limbs and cured very persistent diseases. He did not heal every sick person even in Israel, but His miracles were dramatic.**

**Today, if a limb is broken, a child is born with a serious heart problem or even when someone contracts cancer we largely expect our doctors and hospitals to restore them to health!**

- **Again, we take so much of this for granted and fail to note that this progress was a direct result of the advance of the Gospel in mostly western nations!**

**It was the early Christians who had the compassion to help those stricken by the plague while Roman citizens and even doctors fled to safety. It was Christians who founded the great universities and hospitals where all of the knowledge and techniques of modern medicine were developed. I could go on to talk about sanitation and dentistry and air conditioning but I want to end with some comments on what is obviously the focus of our text this morning:**

**Young Eutychus fell into a deep sleep and fell three stories to his death. The Apostle Paul, in a manner very similar to the ancient Prophets, which is no accident, goes down and lays on the boy pleading with the Lord to restore his life.**

- **How do we do greater works than that?**

**First we need to remember that this boy's resurrection as well as all the others were NOT the same as the resurrection of Jesus! Jesus was the first fruits of the second, or final resurrection when the bodies of the saved and the damned will be eternally raised NEVER to die again.**

**Both of the children raised by the Prophets and the man who revived in Elisha's grave would face death again. Eutychus and Docus who was raised by Peter both eventually died.**

- **The daughter of Jairus, the Widow's son at Nain and even Lazarus who were raised by Jesus Himself went on to experience physical death.**
- **Only Jesus was raised to never die again, confirming that we all shall also be raised in like manner at the Second Coming of Jesus.**

So, in a sense these other resurrections are merely a more dramatic healing, giving those people more time to live. But in the course of history they went on to face physical death, just as those who were fed by Jesus did, just as those who had demons cast out did and just as those who were healed of various diseases did in the end as well.

- So even here, we are today performing the greater works that Jesus commanded us to do.

We in the extended Stoos family recently saw a dramatic demonstration of the point I am trying to make... My son-in-law Jay Nelken took a serious fall at work about six weeks ago, landing on a concrete floor from a height of at least 12 feet. Without the advances of modern medicine his brain swelling and other injuries would have killed him in a matter of hours or days.

Instead, there was an ambulance crew who carefully transported him to the hospital where skilled surgeons actually removed a portion of his skull temporarily to relieve the pressure of the swelling and for days he was surrounded by doctors and nurses using breathing tubes, IV's warming blankets, drugs and lots of loving care to give his body time to heal.

We celebrated Jay's return home this week and I can assure you that we were 'not a little comforted' just as these Saints at Troas were in our text when young Eutychus was brought back in alive. In reality, Jay was given the same type of resurrection that young Eutychus received from Paul who also worked under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Our modern medicine is a direct result of the blessings that our culture has received from God as people were faithful to the Gospel and obeyed all that Jesus taught.

- Many of those who cared for Jay would probably laugh at such a thought, and that should cause us great concern.

We as a nation are no longer thankful for the blessings we have been given and in our pride think that we have accomplished all of this on our own. This is a very dangerous place to be in and God gave a serious warning to his people as they were about to enter the promised land regarding such an attitude: A warning he gave not once but TWICE! You can study them at some length in the 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> chapters of Deuteronomy. I want to close today with the warning from the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter:

Deuteronomy 8: “ 7 For Jehovah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees & pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; 9 a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.”

God certainly has no problem with all the prosperity that we see in our modern world:

- The promised land was a picture of how it pleases Him to bless His people, something we have certainly seen in our nation.
- BUT we are to remember the source of our blessings...

10 “When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless Jehovah your God for the good land which He has given you.”

- We are to be a thankful people!

**Then comes the sober warning that we must heed today more than ever:**

11 "Beware that you do not forget Jehovah your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, 12 lest--when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; 13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; 14 when your heart is lifted up, and you forget Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty

land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; 16 who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end-- 17 then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'"

- Is this not the cry of proud modern man?
- The entire Humanist Manifesto is a declaration that we have made progress by ourselves without God!

The Lord then points them to the right path with yet another warning about what will happen if they forget God: *[that is three in just two three chapters!]*

18 "And you shall remember Jehovah your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. 19 Then it shall be, if you by any means forget Jehovah your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. 20 As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God."

There are many nations down through history who have turned from God and been destroyed, and that is a reality and warning that we must heed.

- However, I believe that as history progresses we will see more and more nations coming under the rule of Jesus and being faithful!

Again, this is the picture that Jesus gives us in many of His parables, like the tiny mustard seed that grows into a mighty tree or the yeast that leavens the entire loaf.

- May we rejoice in the greater works that Jesus has given us to do through the power of the Gospel as we serve Him in the power of the Holy Spirit who He sent to us.
- And may we be those who never forget the real source of that power and those blessings!

And for the sake of our nation, may we faithfully lift up the prayers many of us read this week in Psalm 80: "17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. 18 Then we will not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. 19 Restore us, O Jehovah God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!"

#### Communion Meditation:

Psalm 81: " 8 "Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you! O Israel, if you will listen to Me! 9 There shall be no foreign god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god. 10 I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. 11 "But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me. 12 So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels. 13 "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! 14 I would soon subdue their enemies, And turn My hand against their adversaries. 15 The haters of the Lord would pretend submission to Him, But their fate would endure forever. 16 He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat; And with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you.""