

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR NERSES BALABANIAN

The Power of Resurrection – Fact AND Experience



During the Wednesday Night Lenten Studies, we read and contemplated on different sermons from the book “Jesus, Keep me Near the Cross” edited by Nancy Guthrie. On the last Wednesday, we read a very powerful chapter called, “Knowing the Power of His Resurrection” by Tim Keller. I would like to share a few reflections on that sermon because it made an impact on our hearts and minds. The chapter was based on the following passage from Paul’s letter to the Philippians:

“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:7-11 NIV11)

Here is how the sermon started: “I was watching a documentary recently on PBS and there was a minister who was asked, ‘Do you believe Jesus was raised from the dead?’ And he responded, ‘The purpose and the personality and the power that was in Jesus continues, so that today he is risen and living presence and possibility.’ What was he saying? He was suggesting that the purpose of Jesus lives on but that he is still physically dead.

But if Jesus’ example lives on while he is really dead, you can only know him as an example. You can’t talk to him, and he can’t talk to you. If Jesus is not really living, he is not a living force who can come in and intervene in your life. You will have a form of religion without any power.

But on the other hand, it is also possible to be orthodox about your belief in the resurrection of Jesus, but if you’ve never had a profound experience of that resurrection, your own spiritual resurrection, then you have a form of religion without power as well.

On one hand, the resurrection is a fact to be believed. On the other hand, it is an experience to connect with. If you have one without the other—if you believe in the resurrection as historical fact, but never experience the resurrection personally, or if you think of the resurrection as a spiritual experience but don’t believe it was a fact—you come out with a form of religion with no power.

My question is: Do you know them both? Do you believe in the resurrection as a historical event, and have you also had that profound personal experience of spiritual resurrection?”¹

This sermon opening made me think about this question: Have we experienced the power of His resurrection as fact AND as experience?

I went back to our sermon series from John’s Gospel.

Jesus said to his disciples as he left this earth:

“In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will

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Badveli Nerses Message:

The Power of Resurrection

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see me.” (John 16:16 NIV11)

We are talking about a historical fact here. We are talking about Jesus dying on the cross. **The hour has arrived.** “Jesus is departing from the world in his glorification and the world will no longer have access to him. When he returns in resurrection, it will be his followers’ final opportunity to see him as he has always been.”²

What happened on Resurrection Sunday and afterwards?

On the resurrection morning Mary saw him (John 20:18) and the disciples did (John 20:20, 25a). Seven days later Jesus invited Thomas to “see” him (John 20:27, 29). In the following days the two men on the road to Emmaus saw the risen Lord (Luke 24:13-35), so did more than 500 brothers and sisters (1 Cor. 15:6).

These are historical facts.

Brothers and sisters, the resurrection of Jesus is not just any event. “Seeing Jesus” is the evidence that the tomb is empty. There is history before resurrection and there is history after resurrection. Brothers and sisters, this is historical confirmation that God opened a new page with humanity. The hour has arrived that God will be glorified, and His glory will be revealed all over history.

The disciples were new people after the resurrection of Jesus. In fact, on the day of Pentecost, when the Advocate, the Holy Spirit arrived they were on fire. They did experience the power of resurrection. Read the Book of Acts and you can see how these fearful disciples received courage and vision to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world. The apostles, the *arakyals* (meaning those sent with a message), experienced both the historical resurrection and the personal experience of the power of resurrection in their hearts. We all know the result. The Gospel of Jesus Christ reached to the whole world in many languages.

So how about us? We have not “seen” Jesus physically. Those verses are good for the disciples. How about us? We are called blessed!

“Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed.”
(John 20:29 NIV11)

We have the Word of God. His Word is where we read about the historical resurrected Jesus. Paul makes it clear that without a resurrected Jesus our preaching and faith are useless. **“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”** (1 Cor 15:14 NIV11)

Thus, we know the resurrected Christ by reading His word and knowing about the historical fact of Jesus being risen. We also experience the power of resurrected Jesus by accepting this fact in faith. By faith we are saved. We are blessed that even though we did not see Jesus physically, yet we believe in Him. My life is an evidence of that. I believe in the historical facts about the resurrected Jesus and I do experience Jesus in my heart, mind and soul. Tim Keller adds, “To know Christ is to interact with him personally. But the power of his resurrection is the very life energy that took his dead body and raised it up to life again. So for me to know the power of his resurrection is to have the same power that came into Jesus and raised him up to come into my dead soul and raise me up.”³

I “see” Jesus everyday in my prayer life. I “see” Jesus in my daily quiet time. I “see” Jesus when I give cup of water to a child. I “see” Jesus when someone opens their heart to Jesus as their personal savior. I “see” Jesus when I baptize a person. I “see” Jesus when I approach the Lord’s Table to have communion with Him and each other. I “see” Jesus when I conduct a funeral service, when people are comforted in their mourning. I “see” Jesus standing next to us and saying, “Let your hearts not be troubled.” I “see” Jesus when I officiate a wedding, when two are united lives in the name of Jesus. Please share your experiences saying: I “see” Jesus...

Jesus is alive and by faith we do experience the power of His resurrection.

Krisdos Haryav Ee Merelots. Christ is Risen from the dead.

1. Guthrie, Nancy (editor) “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross” Chapter 22 “Knowing the Power of His Resurrection” by Tim Keller, 2009, Crossway Books, p 131-132
2. Bruce, Gary M, NIV Application Commentary, p 440
3. Guthrie, Nancy (editor) “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross” Chapter 22 “Knowing the Power of His Resurrection” by Tim Keller, 2009, Crossway Books, p 134

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WITH SYMPATHY:
WE ARE DEEPLY SADDENED BY THE PASSING OF:

Mike (Moshegh) Geuvjehizian
March 7, 2021

Our condolences to his family
Well done, good and faithful servant.
You have been faithful over a little;
I will set you over much.
Enter into the joy of your master.
(Matthew 25:21)

A Belated *Thank You!*

In 2020, many of you joined in to adopt a hymnal. Because of the pandemic there were significant delays with getting this project completed. At last 136 red hymnals have now been rebound and are as good as new. Thank you from the Deacons for your generosity.

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Easter reminds us of the love of a Perfect God for flawed mankind. Jesus Christ died on the cross. He was buried and on the third day, He rose again to bring hope to the world.

That being said, I wish you Christ's many blessing throughout the year. May the Lord lift up your hearts as His love shines in your life.

CHURCH MINISTRIES

The Church Council met virtually. Each Board/Committee presented their respective reports. Let me take this opportunity on behalf of the Congregation to thank God for the various ministries and the commitment to serve the Lord through our church.

BIBLE STUDIES

The various Bible studies continue weekly/monthly. In addition, four weeks of Lenten Bible Study, was held virtually on Wednesday evenings, led by John Eleazarian. Thank you, John for your continued willingness to glorify God with your service.

WORSHIP SERVICES

We are grateful that we continue our in-person worship services and are able to worship and glorify our Lord in the sanctuary again. I wish to thank the Congregation for following the Deacons and Trustees ushering during the worship, in compliance with the CDC Guidelines.

I also wish to thank Shawn Kalemkarian and Barbara Vartan, for beautifying our sanctuary during Lent and Easter; and the children for their participation in the service on Palm Sunday.

With the suggestion of our pastors, we were also able to hold our Easter Worship Service outdoors to accommodate more parishioners.

In closing, I thank God for what we have been able to accomplish together for the gospel and our fellowship during this last year. May God continue to guide and direct our path individually and as the Body of Christ.

— by Moderator Edward Saliba

**"As it is, there are many parts,
but one body."**

(1 Corinthians 12:20 NIV)

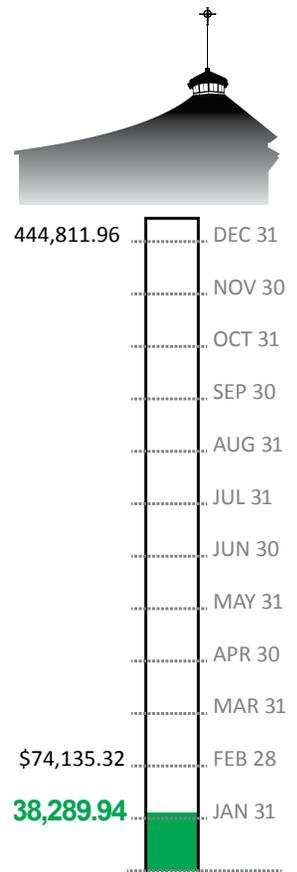
2021 ANNUAL GIVING RECAP

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. (Malachi 3:10 ESV)

The graph shown indicates the total budgeted amount for annual contributions necessary to operate our church home. The current month indicates where we should be at this time, based on the budget. The final amount shown is the actual contributions we have collected through the current month. For February 2021 we have received 52% of the budgeted amount of contributions.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! What an awesome God we have that has blessed us with grace and mercy and provided the way for us to be reconciled to Him. ***"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*** (Romans 5:8) Our part is to accept and worship Him, putting Him first in everything. ***"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*** (Colossians 3:17)

I recently heard a devotional and one of the things the pastor said was; We are not saved by good works. We are saved for good works. In gratitude for all He did for us, let us seek and trust Him in ALL we think, do and say.



*The Saviour alone
Carried the cross
For all of my debts
He paid the cost
Salvation complete
Now forever I'm free
Calvary covers it all
Calvary covers it all
My sin and shame
Don't count anymore
All praise to the One
Who has ransomed my soul
Calvary covers it all*

*Excerpt from Hillsong's "Calvary" by Jonas Myrin,
Reuben Morgan and Mrs Walter G Taylor*

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

Prayer Concerns from Our Sister Church:

EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF GYUMRI, ARMENIA

Dear Pilgrim Family, please pray for our brothers and sisters in Gyumri, Armenia. During our recent monthly prayer time, we realized they are in a lot of agony. It is hard to imagine and heart-breaking how the 44-day war has impacted their lives.

- Thousands of families have lost dear ones in the war. Please pray for comfort.

- More than 200 Prisoners of War (POWs) are held in Azerbaijani prisons. One of those men, Samvel Shukhyan, is from the Gyumri Church. This is excruciatingly painful for the community. Let's pray for their quick release.

- Pray for the political unrest, divisions, protests, and for peace and calm during the upcoming elections on June 20, 2021.



- Every summer the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) sponsors summer camps for thousands of children and youth in two camp areas. It is different this year. The Bedrosian Camp in Shushi was lost in the war. Pray for guidance as the leaders plan summer camps at Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan.

- Please pray for God's protection of our brothers and sisters during the

COVID epidemic as the numbers are spiking.

"Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Wednesday Night Lenten Study



Children's Ministry

The Annual
Easter Egg Hunt
will be held Easter Sunday
during Children's
Sunday School

Hello Dear Friends,

We happily welcomed the beginning of springtime this month. The children have been busy in the garden. They worked hard to prepare the soil for planting. So far they've planted a strawberry patch, Armenian cucumbers, and cherry tomatoes. They have observed through watercolor the blossoming fruit trees and the new growth after winter dormancy. Their works of art are often on display in the classroom windows, so please check there often.



We have moved into John 8 of the inductive Bible study, and typically dedicate two Sundays per chapter. Slow and steady wins the race!

Saint Patrick's Day and Palm Sunday celebrations were also included in our learning and activities this month.

New friends are always welcome! Please join us Sunday mornings! Currently, we offer classes for grades 1-6, and accept ages 4 and up.

Check in: 9-9:15a

Class: 9:15-10:15a

Please join us!

— by Children's Ministries Director
Melinda Eritzian



PILGRIM
Armenian
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

3673 North First Street
Fresno, California 93726-6870

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

In-person 10:30 am

Masks Mandatory • Social distancing

Online at 10:30 am

On our website: pilgrimchurch.com

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
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Fresno, CA



WE'RE BACK

One Day Getaway

WHO'S GOT YOUR BACK?

Register at camparev.org • Space is limited! Masks Required
Juniors (Grades 3-5) April 10 • Junior High (Grades 6-8) April 17
High School May 1