

You probably don't remember the name **Nikolai Bukharin**. During his day he was as powerful a man as there was on earth. As a Russian Communist leader he took part in the Bolshevik Revolution 1917, was editor of the Soviet newspaper Pravda (which by the way means truth), and was a powerful member of the Soviet Leadership. His works on economics and political science are still read today. There is a story told about a journey he took from Moscow to Kiev in 1930 to address a huge assembly on the subject of atheism. Addressing the crowd he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity telling the whole crowd it was hog wash. An hour later he was finished. He looked out at what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of men's faith. "**Are there any questions?**" Bukharin demanded. Deafening silence filled the auditorium but then one man approached the platform and mounted the lectern standing near the communist leader. He surveyed the crowd first to the left then to the right. Finally he shouted the ancient greeting known well in the Russian Orthodox Church: "**CHRIST IS RISEN!**" The entire mass/crowd arose and the response came crashing like the sound of thunder: "**HE IS RISEN INDEED!**"

I say to you this morning: **CHRIST IS RISEN!** I am convinced! I have faith that Christ was dead and he was buried. That I believe. But, this too I accept as true: He rose from the dead and will come again in glory.

This is Easter—As I come before you and proclaim GOD'S WORD. . . I cannot begin to tell you how SURE I AM ABOUT THIS "GOOD NEWS."

But, many will say to me, how do you know that the resurrection is real?

First I would say that I believe in resurrection because somebody told me about it. Well, many would immediately reply, "that is not good enough!!" **Well, it may not be--** but the truth is most of what we know is simply because somebody told us about it.

How do you know that Columbus discovered America in 1492? Were you there? No! But there were people there who witnessed and wrote about it and that is how we know about that. How do you personally know that a man has walked on the moon? Were you standing there to meet him when he stepped off? NO!! But I sat in school, as a young child and saw it on TV. There are people to this day who insist that it was all done in a fake TV studio down in Hollywood. Many of them would insist that the International Space Station is all a hoax. That may sound absurd, but the truth of the matter is I cannot prove it or disprove it. **In the end, I guess I would have to say: I do believe that a man has walked on the moon, simply because a lot of people have told me about it.** AND WHAT AROUND THIS CORONA-VIRUS THING?? IS IT A FACT??? Unless you have the virus, or have lost someone to it, you have to trust what you are hearing.

We have far more historical proof of the resurrection than we do thousands of pieces of information which we routinely accept as fact every single day. If we are going to take a stand on something, then why not the historic testimony of countless persons throughout the ages who have declared the validity of the resurrection.

When Mary went to the tomb on that first Easter morning she did so with a heavy heart. Her Master, her teacher, her friend had passed away. All of life was now in doubt. She stood at the entrance to that tomb weeping. And then she meets the gardener and then the gardener calls her by name. "Mary," he says. Can you imagine the look in her eyes and she turns and looks into his. Do you remember what she said? The joy of that first Easter can be found in her one word response, "Rabboni!" She yells. "Teacher!" And from what John tells us she must have leaped into his arms. Jesus tells her not to hold onto him just yet.

Now I want you to listen to this next thing Jesus tells Mary. **It is the job description for the church.** He tells her: **Go to my brothers and tell them.** My friends I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ because someone told me about it.

Undoubtedly, there are people who are bothered by the fact they cannot prove that when Mary told the Disciples "**I have seen the Lord**" she spoke the truth. I will grant you. It cannot be proven. But the truth is that you will never have more proof than the testimony of those first century witnesses. There are no photographs. Resurrection cannot be proven, nor can it be disproved. And that is why there are many brilliant people who believe and many brilliant

people who do not believe. Because it can't be proven either way. **What we know of it is simply what people have told us about it.**

The second reason that I believe in the resurrection is that it has stood the test of time. A lot of things start off good but soon fizzle out. I'll never forget the MSU SPARTANS, my favorite Basketball team for years. The things that Magic Johnson accomplished on the floor, years ago were simply impossible to describe. He was the kind of talent that sports journalist love to write about throughout his career. Then came Tiger Woods in 2000. What Woods did in winning four Major titles in a row in 2000-2001 is arguably the greatest athletic accomplishment of our time. But, let me tell you something. These athletes, along with singers and actors are catapulted to the national spotlight but their star soon fades, either because our memories of them fade over time or they tarnish their reputation more quickly because of their own personal failings.

Fame fades and new fads and fashions emerge. This is acceptable business encouraged by the music industry. The industry philosophy is, "You are only as good as your last hit record." Songs come and go so fast you barely have time to learn them but you take that song Amazing Grace. Now there is a song that has stood the test of time. John Newton, that infamous British slave trader, was converted by John Wesley and subsequently renounced his slave trading and wrote this great hymn: Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see. Your great grandparents sang that song, and long after you and I are gone, people will still be singing that song. Why? **It's the real thing, it is a genuine thing, to both believers and those who are not sure what they believe in, AND IT HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME.**

AND, I BELIEVE THE "RESURRECTION TOO, IS GENUINE, BECAUSE IT HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME. It was not something that was here today and gone tomorrow. As long as there is life on earth there will be people talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Third, I believe in the resurrection, because I have experienced it. The first century disciples did not believe in the resurrection because they could explain it; **THEY BELIEVED IN THE RESURRECTION—BECAUSE THEY HAD EXPERIENCED IT.** One whom they had known in the flesh and had seen die was now alive and with them.

BUT WHAT ABOUT US...HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE THE RESURRECTION IN OUR LIVES TODAY?

Sometimes we EXPERIENCE THE RESURRECTION THROUGH THE LIVES OF THOSE WE KNOW...THROUGH THE LIVES OF THOSE WE LOVE... Little Philip, born with Down's syndrome, attended a third-grade Sunday School class with several eight-year-old boys and girls. Typical of that age, the children did not readily accept Philip with his differences, according to an article in leadership magazine. But because of a creative teacher, they began to care about Philip and accept him as part of the group, though not fully.

The Sunday after Easter the teacher brought L'eggs pantyhose containers, the kind that look like large eggs. Each receiving one, the children were told to go outside on that lovely spring day, find some symbol for new life, and put it in the egg-like container. Back in the classroom, they would share their new-life symbols, opening the containers one by one in surprise fashion. After running about the church property in wild confusion, the students returned to the classroom and placed the containers on the table. Surrounded by the children, the teacher began to open them one by one. After each one, whether a flower, butterfly, or leaf, the class would ooh and ahh.

Then one was opened, revealing nothing inside. The children exclaimed, That's stupid. That's not fair. Somebody didn't do their assignment." Philip spoke up, "That's mine." "Philip, you don't ever do things right!" the student retorted. "There's nothing there!" "I did so do it," Philip insisted. "I did do it. It's empty. The tomb was empty!" Silence followed. From then on Philip became a full member of the class. He died not long afterward from an infection most normal children would have shrugged off. At the funeral this class of eight-year-olds marched up to the altar not with flowers, but with their Sunday school teacher, each to lay into Philip's casket an empty pantyhose egg.

YES, FROM A YOUNG DOWN'S CHILD, THESE CHILDREN AND THERE TEACHER ALL "EXPERIENCED THE RESURRECTION!!

HAVE YOU HEARD THE SAYING: The only difference between a grave and a rut is the dimensions?

It is a folksy way of saying the resurrection is not just for the afterlife; it is also for this life here and now. **DON'T GET IN A RUT AND MISS THE IMPACT OF THE RESURRECTION!!! It is power for the living of these days.**

My friends, we can sing the great hymns of Easter, we can hear again the familiar stories of scripture, we can enjoy the lilies, and we can join in on the Halleluiah chorus. Easter can be experienced in these ways. But the real power of Easter is the way that people's lives are moved from death to life, from sealed tomb to open doorway, from despair to hope, from the old ways to new opportunities. **That is Easter. That is resurrection.**

I believe in the resurrection because I have seen the God of resurrection at work. I have seen the risen Christ raise people from the death of despair to the joy of new life.

YES, on Easter. The Risen Lord comes back to life... and assures the disciples that they are forgiven.

- Peter had denied his Lord three times.
- Thomas had doubted.
- All the disciples had forsaken Him.

YES, Christ came back, forgave them, and resurrected them. He came back to share with them... He comes today, this morning, to share with you the joy, the encouragement and the forgiveness of Easter.

Why do I believe in resurrection?

- I believe in it because somebody told me about it.
- I believe in it because it has stood the test of time.
- But supremely I believe in it because I have seen it in the life of others and I have experienced it myself.

IT IS WHY I CAN BE WITH YOU THIS MORNING AND SHOUT...CHRIST IS RISEN! Yes..."He is Risen Indeed!!!"