



Abundant Life Christian School

MS/HS Chapel: Evidence for the Resurrection

with Pastor Tom Flaherty

This is a summary of the key points of Pastor Tom's talk on the 'Evidence for the Resurrection,' his chapel for middle & high school students from April 9, 2020.

I. Apologetics.

- a. Faith in our culture has come to mean believing in the absence of evidence, but Biblical faith is becoming persuaded to believe because of the evidence. *Disney has made "believing" a virtue. Believing is a disaster if what you are believing isn't true. There are many things that we need to doubt!
- b. God invites us to question and to seek answers so that our faith grows deeper. We are called to love God with all our minds. To believe in Jesus and the Bible will not require you to contradict your mind; however, true faith will transcend your mind because God Himself transcends our minds. Proverbs 3:5 NIV "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." *There's nothing that says don't use your understanding, it's a caution that God and His ways are much bigger than your present understanding – don't let your mind keep you from leaning on God.
- c. N.T. Wright compared apologetics (reasons for the faith) to a candle in the dark room of rationalism that gives enough light so you can open up the curtain with childlike faith and allow the sun to shine brilliantly in. Apologetics gives our minds permission to believe. Two groups it helps:
 - i. Christians – There is an attack that will be full force when you leave your parents' home: "Did God really say?" It will come from every direction and I want you prepared and not threatened when the Bible is questioned.
 - ii. Non-Christians who are willing to believe if it's true. Some people want to not believe. Apologetics won't help.
- d. Over the next few weeks, I have the privilege of doing chapels and would like to address questions you have about God, the Bible, or God's perspective on current issues. No question is off limits! **Give your questions to your Bible teachers and they will get them to me.** The ones asked the most often will be given priority and we'll go from there. If time does not permit to answer a question publicly in chapel I will try to respond personally to you. Your questions are important to God.
- e. **Next Wednesday from 6:30-8p, I will be covering the topic: "Does Science Contradict the Bible."** Because of this very important talk, I won't be covering this topic in our chapels. *Please watch that on Wednesday if you have questions in that area.*
- f. A week from Sunday on I will be doing a talk from 6-8 pm called: "The Puzzle of the End Times." If you have questions around this very important topic I'm urging you to watch that.

II. The Importance of the resurrection.

- a. Evidence to believe will be both objective and subjective. Paul had an experience with the living Christ, yet he maintained that his experience didn't make it true. What made Christianity true was the resurrection.
- b. 1 Corinthians 15:14 NIV "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."
 - i. Not forgiven of our sins.
 - ii. Those who have died in Christ are lost.
 - iii. We are of most men to be pitied.
- c. Acts 17:31 NIV "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead." *This is the sign God has given the human race. *What authority? *Give us a sign.

III. Scholars and Historians.

- a. Over three quarters of New Testament scholars whether unbelieving or believing agree on two things:
 - i. Christianity began in the Middle East with the message of the resurrection central right from the beginning.
 - ii. The sincere belief that the original apostles saw an empty tomb and had apparitions of Jesus. *It had everything against it naturally – away from money and power – all it had was the sincerity of those who believed they had witnessed Jesus alive.
 - iii. They don't believe they stole the body. It's too much to believe that they all died except for John for something that they knew was a lie and gained nothing from it.
 - iv. The empty tomb is necessary to come to resurrection. An apparition isn't enough to conclude a resurrection had occurred.
*Samuel appearing to Saul.
 - v. Apparitions – they were sad, tired, and open to see what they wanted to see. The problem: three joint apparitions – in Jerusalem, in Galilee, and one of 500. Atheist psychologist: it's easier to believe in a resurrection from the dead than a joint apparition.
- b. Historians look at things differently than most people.
 - i. Paul's account in the first century includes Peter, James, the eleven, and the 500 men but no mention is made of women. Women were not accepted as witnesses in that culture.
 - ii. So the fact that women are the primary witnesses in all four gospel and Mary Magdalene, a recovered prostitute, as the first, can't be to convince someone that the story is true. The only reason they are there because that's the way it happened.
 - iii. What we see as discrepancies (number of angels, women, exactly what the angel said), historians see as separate witnesses. If they were too much alike, they would conclude that they were copies of each other.