

Resurrection Reality
More Than a Story
April 10, 2011

Good morning everyone. As Shannon said, we're in the second week of our series "Resurrection Reality" and, if you weren't here last week, that might seem a little odd to you because it's not even Easter yet. But as I pointed out last week, a lot of churches (including this one) typically spend several weeks during this season focusing on the Cross, but only one week – Easter Sunday – talking about the Resurrection of Jesus. And that's okay, but, the Bible tells us that it was the *resurrection* of Jesus that gave the cross of Jesus its significance.

So, I decided to switch it up a bit this year and heighten the focus on Jesus' rising from the dead on that first Easter Sunday and what it means to us. That's not to say that

we're ignoring the Cross at all, because, as I mentioned last week, we are doing a special service this year on the Wednesday night before Easter (not this week, but the next Wednesday) called the Tenebrae service. There are details of that in your program. It's a time for us to come together from about 7 to 8:15, to just reflect on what it meant for Jesus to die for our sins. And, I think it would be awesome that night if we fill this auditorium and honor him and what he did for us. Again, details are in your program.

Anyway ... this morning, we're going to look at whether or not it makes logical sense to believe in the resurrection. And we're going to look at that question from the point of view of someone like the "doubting Thomas" in our drama – someone who needs a *reason* to believe.

Of course, you might say, "wait a minute,

Rick. Don't we *all* need a reason to believe?"
Actually, no. As a matter of fact, "reason" is *not* the reason that most of us who are Christians came to believe in Christ.

For example, when I prayed to receive Jesus as my savior when I was in the 9th grade, I hadn't given a whole lot of thought to whether or not the resurrection of Jesus really had happened. At that point, I hadn't been in church very much in my life, so all I had were three basic things going on at that time:

1. I knew God loved me. It didn't make sense, but for some reason God loved me.

2. I knew I was a sinner ...

... and I didn't need a preacher or a bible to tell me that because I felt this

guilt every time I would terrorize my younger sisters or had been disrespectful to my mom.

3. And I knew – at least, I had heard – that Jesus died on the cross to forgive my sins.

I didn't understand why or how Jesus' death "worked" to forgive sins but it really didn't matter. What was most important to me at the time was that Jesus' death on the cross provided a solution to a problem that was far beyond my own ability to solve – my own sin problem. And since the resurrection was part of the deal, I just accepted it at face value. There was no logical "reasoning" on my part at all. I just believed it.

Objections to Belief

And, as I said, I think this is how it works for

most people who become Christians.

1. For most Christians *experience precedes investigation* of what really happened 2,000 years ago.

At some point, I think for most of us, those three ideas – that God loves us; that we are sinners; and that Jesus died on the cross to forgive our sins – at some point those come together in a moment of clarity for us and we have an experience with God; we “receive Jesus as our Savior.” And, then we begin to live and believe and follow, as followers of Jesus through the ages have lived and believed and followed.

That’s the way it typically happens, especially for those who grow up in a Christian home.

Of course, it’s precisely this sequence of “experience before investigation” that

causes many who are more logical (like “Tom” in our drama), or people who didn’t grow up in church to think that believers are intentionally closing their eyes to the truth. “You believe it’s true that Jesus rose from the dead,” they say, “because, *without that belief being true*, your ‘experience with God’ isn’t real. It is no more than the product of a manipulative preacher (or a manipulative parent) combined with your guilty conscience and an overactive imagination.”

2. “So you believe what you believe,” they say, “not because you’re *sure* it’s true, but because you *need* it to be true in your life.”

“And, if that’s what you need to get through life ... well, then, that’s OK, I guess. But don’t try to convince me that it’s what *I* should believe.”

And quite frankly, I agree with that. If that’s really what’s going on – if you believe

something not because it's true but because you *need* it to be true (and this applies to any area of life – not just religion) – then you're either being dishonest or irrational. You're either consciously lying to yourself about the facts or you're closing your eyes and playing the "let's pretend" game. In either case, you're certainly not interested in knowing the truth.

And, that's what many skeptics believe about Christians and Christianity: "you all don't really *want* to know the truth. Oh, you might say you do, but you really don't because anyone who stops and thinks about this will have to admit that ...

3. Things like 'resurrection from the dead' just do not happen in the real world.

I mean, dead people don't come back to life. And to seriously think that someone once did is a foolish and illogical thought. And to go

so far as to *build your whole life* on a religion with that belief as its *foundation*, especially when you didn't check it out before you 'bought in', well, that's even more foolish and illogical."

"It's sad to say" a skeptic would continue, "but, at *best*, 'Jesus' rising from the dead' was a fairytale created to provide a happy ending for a group of very sad people – the original disciples of Jesus. At *worst*, it was an intentional distortion of the facts designed to manipulate the unthinking masses into mindless obedience to the Roman Catholic Church. In either case, what you all believe in is nothing more than a made-up story."

"Bottom line, because your experience precedes your investigation of the facts; because you *need* it to be true to support your life; because it just doesn't happen in the natural course of nature that people rise

from the dead ... it's irrational for you (or anyone else) to believe it." That's the skeptic's argument with Christianity as it pertains to the resurrection.

Typical "Christian" Responses

Now, when most of us who are Christians run into someone who can logically state a case like that (or even just part of the case), we tend to respond in one of several ways – none of which are very productive, in my opinion.

1. Sometimes we try to compromise with someone who is a skeptic by "spiritualizing" the resurrection.

"Well, you know you're right that dead people don't really come back to life," we'll say, "so that deal about the resurrection isn't really meant to be taken literally. It didn't really happen physically – it's more of a

spiritual symbol designed to encourage Christians that life goes on even after the cruelest of disappointments.”

Or, some will say, “The resurrection was literally a spiritual event. After his death, the disciples didn’t really see Jesus in a *physical* body; they saw his spirit. They were a little confused, but it was God’s way of letting them know that even though he had died a horrible death, he was still alive – as we all will be after we die.”

2. Sometimes we try to minimize the importance of the resurrection to the Christian faith when we deal with skeptics.

“Look,” we’ll say, “no one can *prove* what happened one way or another, so let’s not argue about it. After all, it doesn’t really matter if the body of Jesus was physically restored to life; what matters in day-to-day life is that we keep his spirit alive by

following his example and loving people like he did.”

3. Sometimes we might trivialize the challenge of believing in the resurrection.

“Bottom line,” we’ll say (like “Greg” did in our drama), “you’ve just got to believe. You’ve just got to feel it in your soul. So, why don’t you let go of all that logic crap. Everybody knows that faith and logic aren’t compatible. That’s modernism – and we live in a post-modern world. Wake up to the 21st century.”

4. Finally, a lot of Christians will respond to the objections of a skeptical person by conceding the absurdity of the resurrection.

“Just between you and me,” we say, “this resurrection deal doesn’t make sense to me either, but, hey, Christianity is working for me. It’s good for the kids, it’s good for the

marriage and it's good for my frame of mind – I feel a sense of peace that I've never felt in my life, I don't feel so alone, I feel like there is probably someone out there watching out for me who has a plan for my life, I've got relational connections in the church with other people who believe this – so I don't want to rock the boat here. Maybe I'm stupid to believe, but I'm happy being stupid. And that's what matters most to me."

So, have you ever heard any of those four responses? If you're a believer, have you ever found yourself *giving* any of those responses to someone else?

The problem with these responses is that not only are they counterproductive (because they don't help a Doubting Thomas to come any closer to the faith), they're also *wrong*

because they do not adequately address the facts of the situation on that first Easter morning as we know them. I'll explain why I say that in just a minute, but I should first add that the same thing is true of the skeptic's objections as well. Those objections fail to adequately address the facts.

So what happens more often than not is that you have two groups of people – believers and skeptics – both saying things to one another, advancing arguments about the resurrection that don't take seriously the story or the historical context of the story. They're holding to positions that they've been culturally conditioned to believe without ever digging into the details.

For example, when a skeptic says to a Christian "your experience precedes the investigation of the facts which means you

now *need* the Resurrection to be true to support your way of life; therefore your belief is invalid" ... that might be true ... but it also might *not* be true. Reality is that we all live in a culture that's taught us to think that way *about matters of faith in particular*. Yet we don't apply that same logic to other areas of life.

For instance, on the day we're born we're all hungry for food and water, so we eat and drink. Our experience of eating and drinking precedes our logical investigation of whether or not food and water is really necessary to live. Yet no one would conclude that it's irrational for us to continue eating and drinking; and no one would conclude that it's narrow-minded to try and convince others to do so as well.

Along the same lines, when a skeptic says to a believer "because resurrections don't

seem to happen in the normal course of nature, your belief must be wrong" ... again, it ain't necessarily so. The best we can say is that we haven't *observed* it happening yet and we don't understand how it *could* happen yet. And that used to be true of lots of things in this world. Really smart people used to believe the world was flat – before they observed it. Really smart people used to believe that flying was the exclusive domain of birds – until they understood how birds fly and then built a flying machine.

Response Problems

Of course, I said that I would explain why the typical *Christian responses* are wrong, not point out problems with a skeptic's arguments. So, let's move on and take a look at that.

First of all, whenever we reduce the

resurrection to a symbolic or spiritual event, besides buying into the same culturally-conditioned belief of skeptics that a literal resurrection is forever and always impossible, a bigger problem is that ...

1. We're overlooking the fact that the gospel writers intended to communicate historical reality.

They weren't going for the spiritual angle, they were trying to communicate historical reality. Now, there's no question they were also trying to promote faith in Christ. They wanted people to believe because of what they wrote. That's why Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are sometimes called "the Evangelists." But they were not inventing cleverly devised stories in order to *produce* faith. They were communicating what they and others had seen and heard of the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Nowhere is this more clearly stated than in the beginning of Luke's gospel, which was written about 25-30 years after whatever happened happened.

Listen to what he says:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us [speaking of the life of Jesus], just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account ... Luke 1:1-4 (NIV)

What Luke is saying here is, "I'm not

interested in symbolism; I'm not interested in spiritualizing." He (as well as "many others" he tells his readers) was interested in finding out exactly what happened concerning Jesus of Nazareth. And that includes the story of the resurrection.

2. Second, whenever we minimize the importance of the resurrection, we unknowingly deprive Christianity of its unique foundation.

See, the resurrection is what validates Christianity. Without it, as I said last week, the cross of Jesus is just another Roman execution. Everything in Christianity rises and falls on whether or not the resurrection really happened, so its importance cannot be minimized.

Listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in the first century (and we read this last week). He said,

If Christ has not been raised [if there is no resurrection - if this is just a game], then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. And if our hope in Christ is only for this life [in other words, it makes life go better because we believe this thing that's really not true], we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

*But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. 1
Corinthians 15:17,19-20 (NLT)*

(In other words, the same thing that happened to him is eventually going to happen to a lot of other people someday).

So, given what Paul wrote, it's not an

exaggeration to say that if someone had somehow produced the body of Jesus – “Jesus wasn’t really resurrected. He’s really dead. Here’s his dead flesh...” – Paul would have called it quits, *even though* the book of Acts tells us that the way he became a Christian was through a blinding-light spiritual encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. And when you read the story, literally, Paul is riding down the road on a horse, going to Damascus, and Jesus appears, and this light blinds Paul and he falls off his horse; he can’t speak. He has an experience with God that preceded his investigation.

And I think this is highly significant because it shows that just because someone has an experience – even a blinding-light spiritual experience – just because someone has an experience that precedes investigation, that does not necessarily mean that they’re

closed off to the truth. That's what Paul was saying: if Jesus didn't really rise from the dead that would invalidate my experience; that would invalidate whatever experience any of us might have. And we would be the most pitiful people in the world because we base our lives on a lie, and we should all quit this nonsense, called church, tomorrow.

Let's move on to the problem with the third "typical Christian response" to challenges from our skeptical friends and family, which is *trivializing the challenge of believing*; saying "don't worry about the details or the logic; just have faith; you gotta just believe."

3. Whenever we trivialize the challenge of believing in the resurrection we also overlook the fact that even Jesus' closest followers had doubts about what had happened.

And I think this is unique to us because we're 2,000 years from the event. A lot of us

have been Christians for a long time. Every year we come to church at this time of year. We go through the sequence of the cross and then the resurrection. And we kind of have it all figured out in our mind. And what happens is, I think we tend to romanticize what really happened. We make it out to be a neat and tidy little package, all sweetness and light: "Oh, Jesus got killed on Friday and everyone was really, really sad. But then on Sunday he hopped up and everyone was really happy to see him again. And they all went on to live happily ever after."

But it wasn't like that at all. Listen carefully to what the Gospel of Mark tells us concerning the reaction of some of the women who went to prepare Jesus' body for the final burial on that Sunday morning and found the tomb empty. Here's what he says,

[When they got there] they

saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter [who probably doesn't think he's a disciple anymore because he denied Jesus three times on the night he was crucified], go tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus is alive and is going ahead of you to meet you in Galilee."

So what was their reaction?

The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.

Mark 16:8 (NIV)

They didn't "get it". They saw the angel; they saw the empty grave. They had been given instructions. They didn't get it. They were terrified. They had to get away from the scene and calm down, think it through, before they could even comprehend what they had seen and heard.

In addition to this reaction, there's also the reaction of Jesus' disciple Thomas. Remember what he said? The other guys had said "we saw Jesus," and Thomas said, "I don't care what you say, I won't believe unless I can put my fingers into the wounds Jesus suffered." Of course, as the story goes, Jesus appeared to him and solved that problem, (which, we would say, was "lucky for him.")

But ... and this is amazing ... even an

appearance of Jesus after his resurrection wasn't a sure guarantee of faith because the Bible tells us that, for some of the people who saw Jesus alive (some of his followers, not skeptics), it was *still* hard to believe.

We just read that the disciples were instructed through the women to go back home to Galilee and Jesus would meet up with them there. And, they did that.

But guess what happened:

*When they saw him (Jesus),
they worshiped him; but [not
all of them] some doubted.*

Matthew 28:17 (NIV)

Some of the people doubted what they were seeing. Now, it's interesting because the Greek word translated as "doubt" is only used twice in the entire New Testament, once here and once in describing the

process of what happened to Peter internally when he got out of the boat to walk up to Jesus and he began to sink because he didn't have faith. It means "hesitation because of intellectual uncertainty."

So what's happening in this scene where Jesus is resurrected is that you have two groups of people seeing the same exact thing and responding in very different ways. One group bows down at Jesus' feet (which is the meaning of the Greek word translated "worshipped"), but the other group is kind of standing back, hesitating, because they're thinking, "This is just too weird. This doesn't fit any paradigm of anything we've ever seen."

Even Jesus' closest friends had doubts and we shouldn't overlook that. We shouldn't trivialize the hesitancy of "Doubting Thomases" to believe.

However ... that's not the same thing as conceding that the resurrection has to be absurd – saying, “well, you know, you're right, this just isn't logical, so we don't need to talk about it” – because to do so ...

4. To concede the absurdity of the resurrection is to release skeptics from the “burden of proof.”

“Wait a minute, Rick, did you say that right? Skeptics have to *prove something* in all of this? How can that be? I thought the Christians are the ones making the claim that Jesus rose from the dead?”

Well, yes, we are making a claim, but skeptics are, too. They're claiming that something else *other than* a resurrection had to have happened on that first Easter Sunday morning so many years ago.

So, a fair question – a question that must be answered – is ... *what was it?* Skeptics need to have an answer for what happened on that first Easter as well as Christians. As Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Church in New York City, puts it ...

“It is not enough to simply believe Jesus did not rise from the dead. You must then come up with a historically feasible alternative explanation for *the birth of the church*. You have to provide some other plausible account for how things began.”ⁱ

And that’s a really big assignment.

Questions for Skeptics

Because, as one historian wrote ...

“Never in so short a time has any other

religious faith or for that matter any other set of ideas religious, political or otherwise without the aid of physical force achieved so commanding a position in such a short time in such an important society as that of the Roman world.

“The more one examines the factors which would seem to account for the extraordinary victory of Christianity, the more one is driven to search for a cause underlying them all.”

“It is clear that at the very beginning of Christianity there must have occurred a tremendous burst of energy – virtually unparalleled in history – without which the future course of the religion is inexplicable.”ⁱⁱ

That’s a pretty strong statement.

1. So, what was that burst of energy that launched “The Church”?

How could the Romans execute the leader of a small, loosely organized movement in the most public, shameful, and painful way, leaving his followers to cower in fear but then, instead of that little cowering fearful group of followers disintegrating, they start a movement – a movement called the church – that not only survives intense persecution but thrives all over the Roman World in less than 200 years?

Christians say it was the resurrection of Jesus that was the catalyst for that. If you're a skeptic, what do you say? How do you explain that? That's the question.

And that's just *one* of the *questions*. There are several more.

2. For instance, how could a movement survive in that era of history and in that cultural setting with its chief proclamation being “He is risen” (referring to Jesus)?

And that was the chief proclamation, as Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in a letter dated no more than 15-20 years after this event.

He wrote:

What I received [i.e. what I was taught) I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time,

*most of whom are still living,
though some have fallen
asleep ... 1 Corinthians 15:3-7
(NIV)*

And since Paul was “passing this on” less than two decades after the event, it had to have been the story that he had heard from the Christians who were actually there from the very beginning. This was the message “He has risen.”

Now, because we live in a completely different culture and we’ve become overly familiar with this story – “Jesus died on Friday; He rose on Sunday” - we do not understand how difficult the message of a resurrection would have been to preach and teach in that day and time. See, a lot of us, because we live in the 21st Century – we’re technological, we’re smart and we’ve figured out all this stuff – we think that the people back then were not only dumb,

lacking intelligence, they were really superstitious and would believe pretty much anything you told them, so, "oh, God rose from the dead, no big deal." Not true.

Because, in that period of time, people also believed that resurrection was impossible. In fact, in the Greek mindset (which was the underlying culture of the Roman world), a resurrection, physically, was totally *undesirable* because they had a core belief that the spirit was what was good, but anything material, including the human body, was evil. So, to them, real freedom happened when the soul escaped the prison of the body, and then once achieving that state, no soul would ever want to go back into a body - as Jesus supposedly did. Resurrection was not even a possibility in the thinking of the pagans, nor was it even desirable.

Then in Jewish theology (the other side of the coin), there was a belief in the physical resurrection of the body, they thought it was going to happen but it wasn't something they believed would happen to just one person, as Christians said it had to Jesus. In their theology, in what they understood, resurrection was something that would happen at the end of time, to everyone, followed by Judgment Day, followed by the beginning of what the Bible calls "the age to come." And actually, all that is still yet to happen.

So, the point being that the idea that one guy had been raised from the dead three days later, would have been incredibly bizarre ...

... which meant that for followers of Jesus to go around preaching "He is risen," about a resurrected Jesus to the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans was sheer folly. It was the

absolute worst strategy you could think of to start a new religion ... unless, of course, it was the truth.

And if it wasn't the truth, what other explanation is there?

Here's another question ...

3. What caused thousands of first-century Jews to suddenly start worshipping a human being (this man from Nazareth)?

And this is an important question because the outstanding and unique characteristic of Jewish theology was the belief that there were not many gods (which is what the Greeks and Romans and every other culture, for thousands of years, had believed – that there were multiple gods), but what made the Jews different from everyone else was their belief that there was only *one God* who created everything. They even had this

little saying that they would repeat daily and every time they got together for a worship service - they would say this thing called the "Shema": "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one." Not many - one. It's what makes us unique.

So, the possibility of these people then worshipping a *man from Nazareth (or anywhere)* would be out of the question because that would imply that there are now two gods – there is the unseen one in Heaven and then there's this guy we see standing right in front of us.

And the only way that would happen to these Jewish people, that thousands of Jews would become believers in Jesus, is if for some reason they radically re-interpreted this core doctrine of "only one God" – overnight – to mean that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, was identical to that "one Lord"; that the "One

Lord" had put on flesh, so to speak, and come to dwell among us. So, why would they do that, overnight, just like that? The Bible says it was because the resurrection proved that Jesus was God. What's your answer if you're a skeptic? Why did the Jews believe that?

Okay, one more question that skeptics need to answer (although there are many more) ...

4. Why were the Apostles willing to die for something that was "just a story?"

I mean, when you look back through history you see that virtually all of the early Christian leaders died for their faith. They were martyrs. Why would you do such a thing, if you thought, "well, we just had to make this up so we could keep the thing going." I don't know about you, but I don't think I want to die for a lie.

As the great French scientist Blaise Pascal once said, "I believe those witnesses [who] get their throats cut."ⁱⁱⁱ In other words, don't believe the ones who back out when the knife is to the throat.

So, what other explanation? Why would they die for just a story, unless it wasn't just a story?

Conclusion

Now, just to be clear, my purpose in raising these questions is not to say, "See, this proves that Jesus really did rise from the dead just like the Bible says." Friends, there is no proof. There is enough evidence to support belief (so that our faith is not blind), but there's no proof. We don't get to put our hands in the nail prints in Jesus' palms or in his side where the spear went in, like

Thomas did.

All I'm saying is that if you don't believe *that Jesus rose from the dead*, if you're a skeptic, then you need to have some other way of explaining the most incredible set of religious phenomena in world history ... or ... you need to reconsider the possibility that far and away the best explanation for why Christianity began and thrived after Jesus' violent death is that He really was alive again in the flesh three days later.^{iv}

Or, to put it another way, what I'm asking you to do is to question your unfaith as much as you question the faith of those who believe.

Of course, at this point, I'm sure that all the believers here are thinking, "OK, this is

really great for our skeptical friends who might be sitting here with us this morning, but what about us?" Well, I hope you'll understand that I haven't been talking *just* to our skeptical friends; I've been talking to you too, and to me, as well.

For one thing, I hope you will take comfort in the fact that your faith in Jesus is not "blind faith." Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, it does take faith to believe, but it's not "blind faith" because it's based in real historical events.

And despite the harsh and angry criticism of a few skeptics here and there, the fact that you believe in Jesus and his resurrection is *not* an indication that somehow you are ignorant or irrational. You may not know how to explain why you believe, in the way that we talked about today, but I think you can see from some of the quotes that I read, that

there are some very smart people (way smarter than any of us) who can. They are not stupid for believing, and neither are you.

Finally, I hope you will see that the resurrection of Jesus is not just the icing on the cake of a nice story about a really good man who got killed. It's a vindication of Jesus' claim to be God. It's the assurance that God is real and that His love is real. It's the sign of God's kingdom physically breaking into our world, assuring us of God's final victory when all of creation will be renewed and restored, just like Jesus' physical body was restored. As we read earlier ...

*Christ ... is the first of a great
harvest of all who have died.
1 Cor 15:20 (NLT)*

That means there's more to come, friends. And it means that the resurrection of Jesus is

the foundation for a life of trust in God and hope for the future.^v And that's what we'll be talking about in the next two weeks.

Let's pray.

God, in a way, all of us here this morning are Doubting Thomases ...

1. Skeptics who want to see proof ...
lean on evidence and see that faith is not a leap; it's a step.
2. Believers who live as if we don't believe. Don't trust the gospel. Live in fear. Live as if all on our own. Live as if we are Lord and not you.

We're all Thomas.

Help us to trust your promise even though we know nothin's safe.

Lord, help our unbelief.

CLOSING COMMENTS – Rick

I pray that God would increase your faith this week, not blind faith, but faith in the evidence.

As we leave, real quickly, I've got a couple of housekeeping things. As you know we really value children here at North Heartland and we have an awesome children's program called Adventureland. We're in need of some additional folks who can help us with our toddler area. And we've talked about this earlier this year. It just seems like we keep producing toddlers around here – I don't know how that happens. But, the unfortunate reality is, sometimes we get too many little kids back there and we have to close down, and so some of the folks can't have their kids cared for, and that's an unnecessary barrier to people being here. So, again, if the first time we talked about this you thought "maybe I should go help" –

we do need your help. And how it works is, you come to church one service and you help in the toddler room the other service, or vice versa. So, if you would like to find out more information about that, when we leave this morning go out to the Adventureland desk/check-in area and see Michelle Muller, our Director of Children's Ministry, and let her know you would like to talk about that.

And the last thing - as we leave this morning we will be receiving the offering at the door. And, if you came prepared to give, that's really cool, but I want to encourage you that there are a lot more people these days contributing online via The City. I think in the last couple of weeks we had about 30% of our offerings come from on-line giving through The City. And that's very encouraging to me because it's a discipline - it shows were getting serious and that this matters and it's not just a spur of the

moment thing. So, as we leave, if you feel like you should contribute, please do, but I just want to remind you that if you really want to say “this as a discipline that I want to develop in my life,” then go on The City and there’s a giving module where you can set up this automatic thing. It’s a way of being disciplined in your stewardship.

Thank you for coming this morning. Next week we’ll continue talking about the resurrection of Jesus, and, it’s Easter Sunday.

God bless you and have a great day.

ⁱ Timothy Keller, *Reason for God*, Pg 202

ⁱⁱ Kenneth Scott Latourette, quoted by Tim Keller in “Easter Sermon,” April ‘96. Referenced at <http://www.cccdlaytona.org/mediafiles/questioning-the-resurrection-sermon-text.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Keller pg 210

^{iv} Wright, p. 113.

^v From <http://spiffymoms.com/forums/showthread.php?t=1824>