

Sunday Sermon – 04/27/2025

Texts: Acts 5:27–32; Revelation 1:4–8; John 20:19–31

Title: “Jesus Gives You Life”

In April 2019, a 24-year-old man from Wisconsin won a \$768.4 million U.S. Lotto jackpot. Isn't that crazy? Even more astonishing—especially for this young man—is that his lifelong wish had simply been to deposit \$1,000 into his bank account for the first time. Let's offer a quiet round of applause for the luck he encountered.

Now, how would you feel if you won that kind of money? I'm sure we'd all feel thrilled for a while. However, as we can see, worldly joy can only take us so far, because it can never bring us true peace. As believers, we have a much greater reason to rejoice than any earthly pleasure.

But the goal of our faith is not something we determine for ourselves—it is set by our Creator, the Lord of our lives. When we align our faith with His will, we begin to bear the fruit of a faith that is necessary, blessed, and eternal.

Today's Scripture readings reveal three essential truths:

Identity – This is the central point. The resurrected Jesus is the same Jesus who died on the cross and was buried in the grave.

Continuity – Jesus was resurrected in a body that could be touched and recognized. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the physical nature of Jesus' resurrection multiple times.

Discontinuity – While Jesus' resurrection was physical, His body was no longer the same. It had been transformed—now possessing new and absolute power.

Through today's Scriptures, we are reminded of the purpose of our faith as revealed through the resurrection of Jesus.

I. Let us first look at the testimony of the Apostle John in the Gospel of John.

Jesus, in His resurrection, was granted the sovereignty of the universe by God the Father. But this sovereignty is not His alone—it is also extended to us, His children. The resurrected Jesus first appears to His disciples, who are trembling in fear of death, and proclaims peace to them.

What does that peace mean? It assures His disciples that His death was not the end, but the fulfillment of forgiveness and reconciliation with God. His resurrection was complete victory. No longer shaken by the cold, dark forces of fear, the disciples begin to experience the vitality, warmth, and light of the Creator's grace. The resurrected Jesus brings peace, the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness to the world.

There are three types of people when it comes to faith:

The first believes because of the evidence.

The second does not believe even with evidence.

The third believes without seeing any evidence, simply trusting the word and testimony of Jesus.

Jesus says to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (John 20:29). That might sound strange, but Jesus can say that because He has given us a faithful and trustworthy foundation for our faith.

In truth, we do see Him—but through spiritual eyes. Our faith in Him opens our vision. Hebrews 11:3 tells us, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by God's word, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible." As God's children, we need the wisdom to freely and properly use one of our most powerful spiritual weapons: faith.

In verse 31, John declares the purpose of his Gospel, which is also the purpose of our faith: that all people may believe in Jesus as the Savior, and that through this faith, they may have life. This "life" includes eternal life—a life that overcomes and transcends every circumstance and condition we face on earth. Therefore, we can have boldness and peace at any time and in any place, with the help of our Savior.

II. Now, let us examine the testimony of Peter and the apostles in the Book of Acts.

There's a story about two gangsters in a fight. One was tall and moved quickly. The other wasn't very tall and his punches weren't strong. Who do you think won? The answer is: "The one who wasn't afraid of death." (Just to be clear, I'm not encouraging anyone to start fights because you're not afraid of death—you're not going to heaven for that!)

Why share this story? Because when the disciples of Jesus stood before the council and high priests, they were not afraid of death. They had personally witnessed the death and resurrection of Jesus. They had received the Holy Spirit, as promised, and were filled with bold assurance. As witnesses of the risen Christ, they welcomed death as a form of glory.

We, too, living in today's world, need that kind of steadfast faith. "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29). This kind of belief helps us win the battle against the world and frees us from its temptations.

The foundation of this victory is not ours—it is Christ's. Jesus has overcome sin and death. Our role is to accept His power without doubt and to rely on it by faith. We don't need to feel burdened or stressed about our beliefs. Instead, we can stand boldly as His witnesses, trusting that His omnipotence and faithfulness will carry us through.

III. Finally, let us look at the Scripture from the Book of Revelation.

Let us pay close attention to what is repeated twice in the five verses of today's text. The Apostle John introduces Jesus with these words: "Who is, who was, and who is to come." Can we find any other being in the universe who fits this description? Never! We are called to kneel in reverence before His total and complete reign. And yet, this eternal Jesus sacrificed Himself for all of us, saved us, will raise us, and will exalt us so that we may share in His divine nature.

Those who ignore Him and deny the great authority of Jesus Christ can only live in fear and frustration. But His children delight in Him. We are thankful, joyful, and proud of His absolute power. Therefore, it is both our privilege and our calling to confess His name, praise Him, exalt Him, and proclaim Him to the world.

C. S. Lewis once said, “Jesus’ greatest achievement is that He proclaimed the message of the Resurrection, and then He rose again as He proclaimed.” Even if your life is surrounded by frustration, darkness, or despair, the Lord comes to you now with resurrection and life. He wants to heal and renew you with that same resurrection power. The only obstacle is our unbelief.

Story: Colonel Russell Conwell: During a battle in the American Civil War, Colonel Russell Conwell once retreated, leaving behind his commander’s sword. Ashamed of this, the commander ordered a young soldier named John H. Ring to retrieve the sword from the enemy camp.

This brave boy risked his life and successfully brought back the sword without being captured. However, as he delivered it to his comrades, he was fatally shot. They rushed him into a medical tent, but just before dying, the boy said, “I am not afraid of death, because the resurrected Jesus is with me, and Jesus is my friend.”

Colonel Conwell, who had been an atheist and a skeptic, knelt before the boy’s body and cried out, “Oh Lord, what shall I do? I will devote myself to You—the God that boy called on!” He later studied theology and donated his entire fortune to found the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the suburbs of Boston.

In addition, he founded Temple University in Philadelphia, where he trained many leaders. That boy’s death was heartbreaking, but because of his sacrifice, Conwell’s life was saved—and through him, countless others were blessed. This kind of sacrifice reminds us of the well-known phrase: “No Cross, No Crown”—or as I like to say: “Yes Cross, Yes Crown!”

A Comedian’s Testament: A comedian living in New York once left this message before he died: “If I die, I want to donate my body to a medical school. Send me to Harvard University, because that’s the only way I can fulfill my parents’ lifelong wish: that I attend Harvard. Becoming a cadaver is the only way I’ll ever get in!”

It’s a humorous reflection, but we thank God that He doesn’t require us to die in order to enter His kingdom.

God has already begun our resurrection life through faith when we receive Jesus as our Savior. We enter the kingdom of heaven not as cadavers, but as living, beloved children of God—eternally alive. Hallelujah!

No matter how much a person wins in the lottery, no amount can ever buy the eternal life that Jesus Christ gives. But every one of you here today already possesses that eternal life!

How blessed you are! How rich you are! Let's clap our hands together in joyful celebration—giving glory to God for His amazing grace!

Closing Blessing: I bless each of you to live every day as a protagonist in the story of resurrection faith—as bold witnesses who share the gospel! Amen.

Reflections and Applications for Today's Sermon:

- 1) The resurrected Jesus said to Thomas, "How happy are those who believe without seeing me!" What is the basis of your belief in Jesus as your Savior, even though you have not seen Him? How is that belief grounded in the Scriptures?
- 2) Read Acts 5:41, which connects to today's message. What might give you the opportunity to rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus?
- 3) Read today's passage from Revelation. Reflect on how the identities of God, Jesus Christ, and yourself—as a reader of the Bible—are expressed in this text.