

CALL to PRAYER - Thank God for the gift of faith and pray that He would give it to others.

Luke 16:29-31 - Three Stories

Intro - Today is a significant day on the calendar which the church fathers set aside as an annual reminder to the culmination of Passion Week. Last Sunday we celebrated *Palm Sunday* ...The day Jesus rode to town and the crowds acknowledged Him as the Promised King and Perfect Lamb of God. Today is *Resurrection Sunday*...for our Lord raised Himself from the dead on the 1st day of week. The resurrection is why the church meets on Sunday (not the 7th day). Special occasions can call for special messages. I am going to do something a little different today by way of style. I am not much of a storyteller, but I want to tell you story...not just one story but three stories. All three are remarkable...amazing... lifechanging...you might say *unbelievable stories*. But all three should be believed. In fact, I don't even like calling them "*stories*" because it could be misconstrued to convey "*make-believe stories*." But all three are "*to be believed stories*." They are also connected stories. I will call them the "*Three Musketeers*" because they are "*all for one and one for all*." They all go together, and you can't have ^(believe) one without the others. They all stand together, or they all fall together. To believe one is to believe all ^(or deny one/all). Though story telling is not my style, I will try my best to convey these amazing, life-changing stories.

STORY #1

- Once upon a time about 2800 years ago there was a city/a great city/capitol... 120,000 kids
 - evil/wicked/ violent city.... "*Sin City*"
- God, being all knowing, noticed *Sin City* and its wickedness. God does not overlook sin
 - But God is gracious and decided to send a warning to this city.
 - He dispatched a prophet to travel 500 miles inland ^(to the NE) and give a message.
- This prophet was very reluctant because *Sin City* was the city of his enemies.
 - So, the reluctant prophet became a rebellious prophet...
 - Instead of going inland to the east he bought a boat ticket and sailed west.
 - (like being told to go from San Deigo to Vegas... but instead jumping the slow boat to Hawaii)
- The prophet was at ease in his sin and sleeping on the "*slow boat*."
 - God provided a storm....sailors terrified....threw cargo overboard...rowed
 - the prophet relayed that he was the problem...worked for the God of heaven who made seas
 - The crew reluctantly threw the prophet into the sea...sea became calm
- God provided a great fish to swallow His rebellious prophet... transport him in the right direction
 - God gets His way - "*Either by boat or by fish...you are going east.*"
 - 3 days and 3 nights in the fish's belly. (probably died...or maybe just miraculously preserved)
 - After 3 days and 3 nights swimming west...prophet was puked up on the shore.
- The reluctant prophet preached wrath at *Sin City*..." *40 days and y'all are toast*."
 - Sin City repents...God relents (gracious) Ex. 34:6-7
- Many lessons/morals to this story - Man is sinful God sees our sin
 - God graciously warns of coming condemnation & uses extraordinary means to deliver His message - Resurrection. Wrath is proclaimed and redemption is offered.
- A side note to this story...about 10 years ago ISIS destroyed Jonah's tomb. (made world news)

STORY #2

- Once upon a time...before there was time...The Triune God wanted to show His love...
 - Plan to make mankind...mankind rebellious...wanted to redeem mankind.
 - Mankind chose death but God would offer the rebels eternal life.
- God sent many prophets throughout time...Moses, Elijah, Isaiah...
 - ...*but at just the right time He sent His Son.* Gal. 4:4-5
 - God became flesh.
 - The Son of God walked among us...being made just like us...
 - ...tempted in every way as us...except without sin
- There is no one like Jesus Christ
 - He changed history and our calendar is set to His unique & perfect life.
 - No none ever did the things that Jesus did
 - He literally walked on water
 - He commanded the winds and the waves...and they obeyed!
 - He turned water to wine
 - He multiplied a boy's lunch to feed a multitude....1000's...(a bunch of leftovers)
 - Healed the sick - blind...deaf...mute...lame...even raised the dead
 - Cast out demons
 - He controlled: the elements...sickness....spirits...life & death. He is God
- The religious establishment hated Him.
 - They demanded a sign to demonstrate His Divine authority (which He claimed)
 - Matt. 12:38-41
- No one ever taught like Jesus taught. He taught with authority...Divine authority
 - He began His ministry by clearing the Temple.
 - They wanted a sign... John 2:18-21 *"...Destroy this Temple and I will raise it in three days"*
 - *The Temple He had spoken of was His body*
 - He ended His ministry by clearing the Temple
 - Teaching, healing, and demonstrating His Divine authority
- Throughout His ministry Jesus spoke openly about impending & predetermined death
 - *"...going to Jerusalem...chief priest will kill Methree day later I will rise.."*
Mk.10:33-34
 - That is exactly what happened
 - Jesus was arrested and charged with blasphemy.
 - He claimed to be the Son of God...made Himself equal with God.
 - And...claimed that when "*Temple*" destroyed He would raise it in 3 days
 - He was flogged, mocked and crucified....died Matt. 27:40
 - His body was taken from the cross and wrapped in linen and spices
 - He was buried and placed in tomb cut out of the rock
 - Interestingly enough...His enemies arranged for soldiers to guard the tomb...
 - His enemies had heard what He said about the 3rd Day.
- After 3 days and 3 nights...early on the 1st day of the week there were:
 - Angles...earthquake...stone was rolled away
 - Soldiers saw and went and reported to Jesus' enemies
 - Women saw and reported to Jesus' friends

- The disciples doubted and could not believe that it was so.....but it was so
- Jesus showed Himself to them and showed them His hands and feet
 - Multitudes saw Him, touched Him, ate with Him and talked to Him...
- Jesus had indeed raised Himself from dead...just as He said!
- Jesus commanded His disciples to tell this story
 - That God has appointed a day for judgement
 - The Judge of the living & the dead is He who was dead but is alive forever...
 - Acts 17:30-31
 - The great sign of the resurrection says that Jesus is the Savior...and none other
 - John 3:16
 - Can you believe this unbelievable story? Rom. 10:9

STORY #3

- ❖ I want to introduce this true story with a made-up story.
 - Man & wife lived in Chicago and wanted a warm get away.
 - The man was away on business and arranged a vacation in Miami
 - The man arrived the day before his wife and hurriedly emailed her from the hotel computer....but accidently typed in the wrong email address.
 - The email went to a woman whose husband had died the day before...
 - She fainted when she read it
 - "Hi, it's your husband" "I have arrived." "I'll see you tomorrow." "Sure is hot down here."
 - We laugh because it is "*make-believe*"but there is always some truth to humor.
- ❖ Now for the true story
 - Once upon a time there were two men.
 - One very rich and the other a very poor named Lazarus.
 - Both died
 - The poor man (no proper burial) was carried by angels to Abrahams side in paradise.
 - The rich man was buried (fancy funeral) but found himself in torment in Hades.
 - The rich man could see Lazarus in comfort by Abraham's side
 - He cried out to Abraham: "*Please send Lazarus over with just a drop of water to cool my tongue...I am in torment in this flame*" Luke 16:24
 - Great gulf fixed....no crossover....no change of destinies or hope for the damned after death
 - Concern for family - "*Please send Lazarus to warn my five brothers so they won't...*"
 - Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets
 - Rich man, "*if someone comes back from the dead they will believe.*"
 - Abraham: "*if they wont believe Moses and the prophets they wont be persuaded even is someone comes back from the dead.*"
- ❖ God has sent Moses and the prophets. God even sent His Only Begotten Son
 - Someone has come back from the dead. DO YOU BELIEVE?