

## "JUST AS HE SAID."

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First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden

April 8, 2012, 10:30am, Easter Sunday

**Texts for the Sermon: Matthew 28:1-10; I Corinthians 15:1-8**

### Introduction

"Because I said so." OK, parents, fess up, how many of you have ever said that? OK, kids, how many of you have ever heard one of your parents so that? "Because I said so." That's a phrase every kid hates to hear, every young person vows they will never say to their kids, and then they become parents and find themselves saying it over and over again. "Because I said so."

To a kid, it's a clear admission of defeat on the part of the parent. To a kid, "because I said so" is what parents fall back on as a last resort when they have lost the argument and can't think of anything else to say. It's a sign the kid was demolished all the resistance and once again the brilliant logic and reasoning of a 13-year-old has won the day.

All that's left for the parent to do is pull rank and declare, "Because I said so."

Now a parent, on the other hand, has an entirely different perspective. To the parent "because I said so" is an appeal to authority. It's an appeal to decades of experience and generations of wisdom passed down from the ages. It's a declaration that there's so much more that could be said but frankly it would be wasted on this immature, irrational, belligerent mind. Besides it would just be dismissed as another one of those endless lectures or sermons that parents are accused of giving. So we cut to the chase, knowing that truth and right are on our side we simply say, "Because I said so."

There's great power in those words. It's the end of the debate, of the speculation, of the doubt. It's the end of the questions. "Because I said so."

Our Father in heaven actually says the same thing just with some different words.

In the OT God spoke through the prophets and we hear repeatedly, "thus saith the Lord," or "the Lord has spoken."

**Hebrews 1:1-3** In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, *2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.*

In the OT the revelation of God was occasional, lacking some fullness or completeness, or finality. In the NT God speaks, if this is possible, with even more authority and clarity and finality than ever before.

With the Incarnation and birth of Jesus, God speaks as He has never spoken before.

**John 1:1-2, 14** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. *2* He was with God in the beginning.

*14* The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The truth is now personal, in fact the truth is now a person, in the flesh dwelling among us. The Logos of God, the revelation of God now in flesh and blood. The revelation of God about Himself has arrived from heaven and has set foot on our earth.

But the spirit of our age is like a child. The spirit of our generation says, “why” and “who said so” and “prove it” and “who died left you in charge?”

And God answers the spirit of the age by coming personally to say, “I am who I am, I am is among you.” God becomes Emmanuel, God with us.

In Jesus we have a million proofs that God has come and God has spoken, but none so clear and convincing as the one He gave on this morning nearly twenty centuries ago.

### **Matthew 28:1-10, (16-20)**

In all of the Gospel accounts, there’s no actual description of the resurrection. No eye saw it, no ear heard it, no pen described it. God let no man behold such an awesome and glorious event. So how do we tell the resurrection story? How can we write about it? We do it the only way we can, we write about its effects. It’s a bit like the harbor fire. There are no pictures or descriptions of the actual beginning of the fire, but tons of pictures and descriptions and evidence of the effects.

Matthew records the effects. He tells us about a huge, violent earthquake, the second one in just a couple of days. This was an earth-shattering event. The huge stone is rolled away from the tomb. An angel of the Lord came down out of heaven, the angel’s appearance was like lightening, his clothes as pure white as snow. It was a scene so terrifying that the guards trembled and fell as though dead. Women had to be calmed, “don’t be afraid. I know who you are looking for but Jesus is not here.”

The angel spoke a single Greek word, **egerthe**, “**He is risen.**” Everything Jesus ever said or did rests on one Greek word, Christianity rests on a single Greek word, Truth rests on one word, hope rests on one word, even life. “**Risen.**”

He is risen, just as He said.

Jesus is a man of integrity, a man of His word. At least seven times in the gospels Jesus predicts and promises His resurrection.

**John 2:18-19** Then the Jews demanded of him, “*What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?*” 19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

**Matthew 12:39-40** He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

**Matthew 16:21** *From that time on Jesus began to explain* to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

**Matthew 17:9, 22-23** As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”  
22 ... “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. 23 They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.”

**Matthew 20:17-19** Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, 18 “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death 19 and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!”

Then finally in the upper room, just a couple of days before Easter.

**Matthew 26:32** “But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

Jesus predicts specific things about Himself that become the proof of who He is. This is a dangerous thing to do. Remember all the foolish looking Y2K doomsayers out there, who said specific things that didn’t even come close to coming true. Remember Harold Camping? Or now how about all the Mayan Calendar doomsayers predicting the end of the world 12/21/12?

But Jesus is risen just as He said. Just as He told you. This is the proof. This is His authority. This is His chief credential. He is risen just as He said. Because He said so.

**Come and see; come and worship; go and tell.**

The angel said, *come and see*, come and check it out for yourself. Come and see the truth. Satisfy your doubting and inquiring mind. Come use your eyes and minds. Christianity bears up to scrutiny. No secrets, no hidden truths, no smoke and mirrors, but a real, tangible, physical, risen person.

Can you imagine if the angel had said “Don’t look in here. Take it by faith. Don’t ask any questions, move along folks, nothing to see here.” No, come and see.

The resurrection is not something to be proved, it is the proof.

Next the angel tells them to hurry and go meet Christ. He wants us to have a personal encounter with Him, the risen Lord. He invites us to a relationship with Him, the only relationship that can satisfy the longing of every human heart.

So the women hurry off and then Jesus appears to them. Those who seek Him find Him. “They took hold of His feet and worshipped Him.” In these *nine simple words* we have a truth about Jesus summed up. It’s called the doctrine of the nature of Christ, of who Jesus really is.

The women *grabbed His feet*, Jesus is fully human, a real human being, sharing our full humanity. He’s not just a hallucination or a vision or a ghost. Yes, He has a spiritual body, but it’s a spiritual *body*.

And *they worshipped Him*, Jesus is fully God. Or as Paul puts it, "In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." (Col. 2:9) Jesus had told Satan way back in the wilderness we are to worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only. And here Jesus is accepting their worship. He's more than just a prophet or a great man or a great teacher, He is Lord and God, God with us. Just as He said.

After they worshipped Him, Jesus sent them on a mission, to *go and tell* others.

The Risen Christ's "Just as He said" now becomes "do as I tell." Sort of a "because I said so."

Jesus has all authority, and on the basis of His authority He gives this command, go tell the nations, go make disciples, go teach everything I have commanded you. It's a vision so great it has kept the church occupied for over 2000 years.

### **Application:**

This is the account of the first Easter, how does it apply to us? What's the proper response to the resurrection? What's the right response to the risen Christ?

*First, the proper response to the resurrection is to come and see.*

Check it out and see for yourself that everything is just as He said. The world's only empty tomb begs our attention. Jesus got the attention of one of the smartest men in the world, Albert Einstein.

Listen a snippet of an interview with Albert Einstein printed in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 26, 1929.

Q. "To what extent are you influenced by Christianity?"

A. "As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene."

Q. "You accept the historical existence of Jesus?"

A. "Unquestionably. No man can read the gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life. How different, for instance, is the impression which we receive from an account of the legendary heroes of antiquity like Theseus! Theseus and other heroes of his type lack the authentic vitality of Jesus." (S. Viereck questions Nobel physicist Albert Einstein, *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 26, 1929.)

What has Jesus said that you are still doubting? What has He promised that you are still questioning? Where at home or work or school have you decided any hope is dead? Where in your life is Jesus still in the tomb? Where in your life has the light of Easter not yet shined?

Seek Him and take Him at His word, believe **all** that He said, for it is just as He said.

Don't waste time, don't squander another minute, go and see Him. Today is the day of salvation. Don't let today pass without seeing Jesus, without meeting with Him personally, without surrendering your heart and your affection to Him. Come and see.

***Second, the proper response to the resurrection of Jesus is worship.*** Matthew 28:9, 17

The resurrection appearances lead to worship, first the women and then the disciples, "when they saw Him they worshipped Him (28:17)."

When we discover Jesus, the chief posture of the rest of our lives should be to take hold of Him, to cling to Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, render to the Lord our worship and praise, our love and adoration. Prize Him, value Him, put Him above everything else that we have tried but has failed to satisfy. (See Luther quote in Bruner, *Matthew*, p. 1084)

Once you know Him, this is your first act.

Cling to His feet and worship Him. This morning you got it exactly right. This is where you should be and this is what you should be doing in response to the news that He is risen.

***Third, the proper response to the resurrection of Jesus is to go and tell.***

All we really have to say is, "have you heard the good news. Christ is risen just as He said, and He loves you." When our culture acts like a 13-year-old demanding reasons, we don't have to offer any more proof than the resurrection.

The resurrection is not some philosophical speculation or academic exercise; it's a revelation; it's a message from God given to us. Christ is risen just as He said.

There's great power in those words. It's the end of the debate, of the speculation, of the doubt. It's the end of the questions. "Because I said so."

We must engage our culture with the proclamation that God has revealed Himself from heaven on His own terms. He has come and chosen us and forgiven us and has said He will be our God.

Love Him and out of love for your neighbor, urge your neighbor to love Him. Come and see, cling to Him, worship Him and tell others about Him.

### **Concluding Illustration**

One of my all time favorite stories comes out of the darkest days of communist Russia. I don't have proof that it's actually true. I hope it is. The story has been around a long time, so maybe some of you have heard it.

It takes place out in the vast reaches of that great soviet empire, in a small remote town. One of the great propaganda chiefs from Moscow has come to challenge what's left of religious faith of the people of the town. He is a highly educated scholar and a skilled communicator. He is well trained in Marxist doctrine and rhetoric. He is good at what he does. The whole town is told to assemble in the town hall on the town square. The old resident Russian Orthodox priest is invited to participate in a sort of trumped up debate.

The young atheist began and for the next hour or two attacks their religious faith from every possible direction armed with the best and most recent research. He shows the fallacies and inconsistencies, the contradictions and lack of proof. He declares with passion that religion truly was the opium of the masses, a projection of their own foolish longings. You could hear the faith and hope and life drain out of the room and out of the hearts. By the time he finished the foundations of faith lay in crumpled ruins.

He sat down triumphant and signaled for the old priest to speak. The old man stood silent at the podium and faced a silent, defeated crowd. What could he possibly say? It was as if he was searching for words. So much damage had been done, where could he possibly start?

After a time he spoke somewhat falteringly, "Christ is risen." Then again, "Christ is risen. Christ is risen." A single voice in the crowd dared to answer, "He is risen indeed." Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. It started to grow and gain strength, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. It reached a crescendo. The communist party chief sat stunned as the hall erupted in the ancient Easter liturgy, Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. Just as He said. Christ is risen, Just as He said.

Because He is risen just as He said, He's not an idea to be debated or argued,  
He is a person to be worshipped and  
a truth to be proclaimed and  
a promise to be believed and  
a command to be obeyed with all your heart.

Hallelujah. To God alone belongs all the glory in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Christ is risen.  
Hallelujah and Amen.