

# **“THE RIPPLE”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

EASTER SUNDAY

**TEXT:** 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

**GOD’S WORD:** JOHN 20:1-9

## **I – STORMY SEA:**

As we have traveled through the Lenten season these past six weeks we have been using the image of water to describe the ministry of Jesus. We’ve talked about how Jesus said he was the living water who had come to satisfy the thirst of a sinful and broken people. As I look at this last week I can see this image of water being the life of Jesus very vividly.

If I see the life of Jesus in this image of water then this last week was a stormy sea. He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the cheers and praises of the people and the sea was calm, but there were storm clouds on the horizon. On Thursday those clouds started to roil the sea of Jesus’ life as he shared a last meal with his disciples and told them about his impending death. The waves got higher as he went out into the garden and prayed so hard he sweat blood from his brow. The whitecaps developed as he was arrested and drug before the religious leaders, the storm clouds darkened and the waves rolled as he was given to the Romans who beat him, humiliated him, and as his own people called for his crucifixion. The storm reached it’s peak and the water became a wall of death as they nailed him to a cross and hung him up to die. The waves crashed against the world as he died with the sins of the world on his soul.

Then the waves calmed. His life was no more, there was no movement on the water as they wrapped his bruised and bloody body in linen cloth, placed him in a tomb and covered the entrance with a massive stone rolled in to place. There were no more waves because there was no more life.

## **II – RESURRECTION RIPPLE:**

For three days the water was calm. For three days Jesus lay in a cold stone tomb. The sea of his life had no movement and was smooth. But then something happened...there was movement in the water again.

On the third day, as the women came to pay their respects and hopefully anoint the body of Jesus with herbs and spices so they could give him a proper burial, there was movement again in the sea of Jesus' life. As they are walking to the tomb I can imagine in my mind a gentle wave starting in the water as my Lord and my Savior sits up and unwraps himself from the linen shroud he has been in for the past three days. I see that wave increase in action as Jesus stands up in the tomb and walks towards the door, and then I see a giant splash as God rolls the stone away from the entrance and HIS Son -Jesus, who had been dead and buried, walks out into the sunlight of that first Easter morning!

And then it began...the ripple. You know how when you throw a stone into a body of water it starts a ripple...a ring of water that starts in the middle and travels out and as it travels it grows and becomes wider and wider? I see that ripple in the Easter story. I see it get Mary Magdalene wet first as she finds the open tomb. Then I see it grow and widen as she runs and tells Peter that the body is gone and he runs and looks in the tomb and sees the empty grave cloths. It widens again as the disciple John comes running and looks in and believes. And it continues to grow and get others wet as the three of them run to tell all the others.

## **III – TEXT:**

I see this ripple at work in the Apostle Paul. He was not one of the original disciples and yet this ripple reached him, got him wet, and made him the main Apostle to the gentiles – the non-Jews. You can see the ripple of the resurrection in his writings to the church in Corinth.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup>Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. <sup>2</sup>It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. <sup>3</sup>I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. <sup>4</sup>He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. <sup>5</sup>He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. <sup>6</sup>After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. <sup>7</sup>Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. <sup>9</sup>For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church. <sup>10</sup>But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace. <sup>11</sup>So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same message you have already believed.

Paul had started the Christian church in Corinth on one of his missionary travels. He knew and loved the Corinthians and wanted to make sure they continued to swim in the right stream.

He tells them that they have gotten wet by the water of life, the ripple caused by the resurrection of Jesus. He knows it for a fact because he's the one who preached it to them and they listened to it gladly and believed. He reminds them of what's at the center of that ripple, the truth that Jesus Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, and that on the third day he rose from the dead just as the Scriptures had said would happen.

Then he makes sure they know how powerful this ripple is. He reminds them that he was the most unworthy of all people to find the living water as the ripple reached him. He did not witness anything that had happened to Jesus and afterwards he was one of the Pharisees in training who helped persecute the early Christians, rounded them up and drug them back to Jerusalem so they could be dealt with by the Religious leaders and the Romans. He considered himself unworthy of any attention from Jesus. But he didn't get damp from the ripple, he got drenched, he saw Jesus and God poured out his grace on him, and he became the hardest working Apostle in spreading the Good News.

He concludes by telling them that it doesn't matter whether they listen to his preaching or the preaching of someone else, just as long as they hear the greatest message of all time that Jesus lived...Jesus died...and Jesus lives again!

## **V – THE RIPPLE:**

It's the middle part of this text though that tells me about the ripple that the resurrection started. This morning's reading told me that Mary Magdalene found the empty tomb, but when I read further in the other Gospels I see that the same day she saw Jesus with her own eyes, wrapped her arms around his feet and worshipped him. This morning's reading told me that Peter saw the empty tomb but Paul reminds me that he later saw Jesus. Paul tells me that the ripple grew and swelled as Jesus appeared alive to all the disciples and then later to more than 500 of his followers. He appeared to his half brother James and he appeared to Paul himself.

That ripple continued on as those who were eye witnesses preached the Good News to others. It grew and swelled as the Holy Spirit arrived on Pentecost Sunday and Peter preached this Good news with such power that 3,000 people were baptized and the Church of Jesus Christ was born. That ripple has continued on down through the ages and affected the lives of people such as St. Benedict, St. Augustine and the other early church fathers. It reached out and affected the lives of the early martyrs like Ignatius and Polycarp as well as all of those who were fed to the lions, burned alive, and crucified themselves. The living water they received was so powerful they refused to denounce the risen Christ even at the cost of their lives. The ripple rolled on and fed the thirst of such men as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Wesley who founded some of our major denominations. And it continued on and on until you and I have been affected.

When that stone was rolled away from the front of that tomb and Jesus stepped out alive it started a ripple so powerful that it changed the Sabbath from Saturday TO Sunday, it changed the calendar to one that revolves around the death and resurrection of Jesus. It changed history – do you remember anything else that happened 2021 years ago? And yet you remember Easter.

## **V – GET WET:**

I can stand here today because that ripple was so powerful and has grown so large that it has reached millions and million of people and after 2,000 years it is still growing and traveling and getting people wet with the living water of Jesus Christ. What other ripple has ever traveled so far, so wide, and so long, and affected so many people as the resurrection of Jesus Christ? The answer is none!

I stand here today because I got wet! I got drenched by the Good News that my God loves me so much that he sent his one and only Son to die for me to pay for my sins. I drank in the news that three days after he died Jesus was alive, he had defeated death and because he did, so can I. I shower every day in that living water knowing that one day I will see a resurrected Jesus face to face and live with him for all of eternity.

And like Paul I stand here and preach so the ripple continues on. I preach the facts that Jesus Christ lived, that Jesus Christ died and that Jesus Christ was resurrected. I preach because I want everyone else to get wet too, to embrace the risen Savior, and drink of the living water. I preach because I want all of you to be able to stand here today and feel the ripple of Salvation as you proclaim,

**HE IS RISEN!**

**HE IS RISEN INDEED!**

**AMEN**