

## “The Amazing Truth” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Easter 3 April 14, 2024

- I. **Luke 24:39** – Jesus said, “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Touch Me, and see.”
- II. **Trust is such an important thing for us.**
  - a. When you look up the word trust, it means confidence in someone or something... or perhaps seeing them as reliable.
  - b. In America today, our overall trust is much lower than in the past.
  - c. I was not aware of this organization, but Edelman is a global marketing firm that publishes something called a “Trust Barometer” report every year.
    - i. The report looks at many different countries around the world, along with people’s level of trust in government, business, non-profits, and media.
    - ii. They study 28 countries, but America is in the lower quarter of the Trust Index... Americans tend to trust less than other countries.
    - iii. Much of our decline in trust over the years is in government and media, which is probably reasonable given the past ten years of ups and downs in those areas.
      1. It’s interesting, but Americans trust business more than the government by a decent margin.
    - iv. The point of talking about this is that today we are less likely to trust in the organizations and people that we used to trust.<sup>1</sup>
  - d. Yet, isn’t our lack of trust a growing issue in our personal lives as well?
    - i. I saw a news story that was titled something like, “I can’t trust anyone anymore...”
      1. A man was parked in a store parking lot sitting in his car waiting when two women approached his vehicle and telling him to roll down his window.
      2. He rolled it down just a crack to find out what they wanted, and they told him that they tracked their stolen iPhone to his car and they wanted to look around.
      3. He knew it was a scam, so he took off... and they followed him for a while before he lost them.
      4. He did a short video explaining what happened and concluded, “You can’t trust anyone anymore.”
  - e. It is true... and sad... that we cannot trust strangers... and that sometimes people will use our caring nature to take advantage of us.
    - i. More and more people tell stories of their lack of trust in people and the world around them.
  - f. So, if everyone in America is growing in distrust and suspicion, it makes sense that people might not believe in the Jesus of the Bible either.

- i. Not only do people reject Jesus outright by not trusting what the Bible says and the Church preaches, but even Christians have trust issues with parts of the Bible.
  - ii. Rejecting Jesus, not finding truth in the Bible, and being suspicious of others is exactly what satan is looking for – because it separates us from God and from each other.
    - 1. Of course, satan doesn't want us to know the truth or to have trusting relationship between each other.
    - 2. He wants to divide and to keep us from trust in Jesus.
- III. **Satan did his best to destroy our Savior on the cross.**
  - a. The whole Passion story was about Jesus being delivered up to destruction by untrustworthy people who served satan's purposes... the government abusing its power, the dishonest and scheming religious leaders, the fickle crowds... and even Jesus' own friends betraying and abandoning Him.
  - b. If anyone has a right to be distrusting and suspicious of people's motives, it's God!
    - i. The problem is we always believe that we are the most trustworthy people, and our motives are always pure... but not the other guy.
    - ii. Yet, we all fall short of God's glory, and we all have sin in us that causes trust issues with others... and with God.
  - c. How trustworthy are you?
    - i. I suppose that depends on how deep we want to go in the questioning – because being trustworthy in one area doesn't make it so in other areas of life.
    - ii. Some of us are “cash register honest”, but never follow through with important tasks for our loved ones.
    - iii. Some of us show up on time and ready for all our meetings, but don't reach out with care and love to our family.
    - iv. Some of us are always there for our spouse and family, but we have wandering eyes and a problem with lust.
    - v. You see, no matter how trustworthy we think we are, there is always some way that we let down others... and God.
  - d. We may lack trust in the people and organizations around us in this day and age, but none of us are exactly trustworthy either.
  - e. Yet, the amazing truth – the thing that is worthy of our trust – is that Jesus was not destroyed by satan, but instead paid for our sins on the cross and rose again so that we are forgiven.
- IV. **Our Gospel lesson** is the story of promises fulfilled – of Jesus as trustworthy.
  - a. He enters the room with them similar to last Sunday's Gospel, but Luke writes that the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost... so Jesus reassures them by showing that He is flesh and blood – and can even eat.

- b. Again, all the prophecies Jesus told about His death and resurrection were true, and the disciples could trust that God followed through with His plan of salvation.
- c. To me, one of the best parts of this reading is when it says that Jesus, “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” (vs 45)
  - i. Up to this point, they were struggling to put the Old Testament and its promises to be fulfilled into the present day with Jesus as the fulfillment of these things.
  - ii. As Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, it’s hard to imagine the connections they made and the insights and inspiration that were given to them.
    - 1. But we know that in time, they would take these revelations and put them down in writing... the writings that we have in our Gospel lessons and New Testament letters and writings.
    - 2. They would be witnesses to the gift of Jesus’ death and resurrection to billions of people in the future – because they were brought the amazing truth.
      - a. The disciples didn’t discover the truth by their own detective work, they were given the truth by Jesus, “the Way and the Truth and the Life.” (John 14:6)
    - 3. No doubt their trust might have faltered after Jesus was executed and buried, but their trust was renewed as they laid eyes on the resurrected Lord.
- d. With their trust renewed, along with the amazing truth of Jesus as their living Savior... they were prepared to witness to many others about what they had seen and heard.

V. **Distrust and suspicion can be overcome by truth... and faith.**

- a. Of course, we cannot force or make a person believe something... but that’s where the power of the Holy Spirit comes in.
  - i. We simply share the story... the amazing truth... and let the Holy Spirit bring a person to faith.
  - ii. Faith is our assurance... our guarantee of God’s promises... and the confidence we have in things we haven’t seen with our own eyes. (Hebrews 11:1)
    - 1. Faith allows us to trust that God is real... that He loves us... and that He saved us through His Son Jesus Christ.
- b. Remember, as we share this amazing truth of Jesus as the Savior with those around us, we are witnessing to them that He is real.
- c. The Easter message is not only true, but it is trustworthy.
  - i. Unfortunately, the world is not trustworthy... and neither are we... but the message we share is trustworthy... Just like Jesus.
  - ii. Our Savior rose from the dead and made Himself known to hundreds of witnesses, and then His followers went to their graves sharing the

amazing truth that Jesus lives... Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed, alleluia.**

- iii. That is a message worth sharing, because it is an amazing truth.  
Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Cision PR Newswire, "2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Reveals Record-Breaking Drop in Trust in the U.S." (1-21-18)