

The Vindication of Jesus

The verdict of humanity was that Jesus was a blasphemer and a dangerous man – that he deserved the worst punishment available, crucifixion. At the crucifixion it appeared as though Jesus wasn't a king; that he couldn't save others; and that God really didn't delight in him. God, however, vindicated Jesus. How? The New Testament tells us that through the resurrection God reversed the verdict of humanity. Through the resurrection God vindicated everything Jesus said and did. Today, as we look at Acts 2, we will see how Peter made this point and then we will consider the implications for us.

Read Acts 2:22-36

1. What is the context of this passage (see Acts 2:1-8)?

2. What were the factors that Peter said brought about the crucifixion (v. 23)?

3. In what ways does this passage make plain that the verdict of the crucifixion was not the last word?

4. Last week we looked at the idea that the word of the cross appeared to be foolishness and weakness (1 Cor. 1:18). What does Peter proclaim in this passage that makes it clear that the cross was anything but foolishness and weakness?

5. Peter gives his summary statement about a vindicated Jesus in verse 36. What is the summary and what are the implications of that statement?

Steve said:

If the resurrection declared that "Jesus is Lord," we should relate to Him as our Lord/master. Paul referred to himself as a bondservant of Jesus - as someone who willingly submitted to Jesus as Lord. If you believe that His death secured your salvation, are you submitting to Him as your Lord? Or has the term "Lord" become something of a religious cliché for you?

6. "I willingly submit to Jesus as my Lord in all things." Agree or Disagree? Thoughts?

Steve said:

Try this exercise this week. Imagine that Jesus is beside you everywhere you go - everywhere. He is with you when you're at work with others; He is with you when you're at home alone. He is always willing to listen. He is always willing to speak. He is always willing to help you in times of need. Jesus isn't bodily "with us," but He did say, "I am with you always - even to the end of the age." Jesus as a present help isn't make believe. He really is with His people. What if this week instead of living our lives independent of Jesus, we live in continual fellowship with Him. What if we abide in Him and let His words abide in us? What if we defer to Him when we have options? For example, when we are wronged, we bless instead of curse. What if we fix our eyes on Jesus and believe that our Lord loves us more than we can fathom and that He is "for us"? What if we pray in Jesus' name, believing that He is Lord?

7. How regularly would you say you move through your days with this sense of Jesus' presence with you?
8. How might it help you to walk as a faithful bondservant of Jesus' if you could live more consistently with this sense of Jesus' presence?