

## Strengths Theology – 08a

### **God is Our Uniqueness**

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#### **INTRODUCTION STATEMENT:**

There are two important and diverse aspects of the Body of Christ that Christians must be aware of.

- The first is that each part of the body is unique, and individual. Each part has a specific function to perform so that the body not only functions properly, but also, so that it grows.
- The second aspect of the Body of Christ is that all parts are a unity, for it is only in working together in unity that they can be healthy. It is only when the unique parts of the body work together that the body can grow.

When considering the health of an organization you start at the top, the head. In our consideration of how the Body of Christ is to be healthy, and as a result of that health, to grow, we will start with the head of the Body, Christ. Christ is a very unique part of the greater body.

- Today we will look at the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection is the uniqueness of our God. Of all other religious leaders and founders only Christ's tomb is empty.
- Next week we will look at how we are created unique by God, to do a unique function in His body.

#### **SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

First; what does the word unique or uniqueness mean?

##### **UNIQUENESS or UNIQUE (DICT)**

Etymology: French, from Latin *unicus*, from unus one more at ONE

Date: 1602

1 : being the only one : SOLE \*his unique concern was his own comfort\* \*I can't walk away with a unique copy. Suppose I lost it? Kingsley Amis\* \*the unique factorization of a number into prime factors\*

2 a : being without a like or equal : UNEQUALED \*I could stare at the flames, each one new, violent, unique Robert Coover\*

(With popular use came a broadening of application beyond the original two meanings)

b : distinctively characteristic : PECULIAR 1 \*this is not a condition unique to California Ronald Reagan\*

3 : UNUSUAL \*a very unique ball-point pen\* \*we were fairly unique, the sixty of us, in that there wasn't one good mixer in the bunch J. D. Salinger\*

synonyms see STRANGE

usage: Many commentators have objected to the comparison or modification (as by somewhat or very) of unique; the statement that a thing is either unique or it is not has often been repeated by them. Objections are based chiefly on the assumption that unique has but a single absolute sense, an assumption contradicted by information readily available in a dictionary. Unique dates back to the 17th century (1602) but was little used until the end of the 18th when, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, it was re-acquired from French. H. J. Todd entered it as a foreign word in his edition (1818) of Johnson's Dictionary, characterizing it as \*affected and useless.\* Around the middle of the 19th century it ceased to be considered foreign and came into considerable popular use. With popular use came a broadening of application beyond the original two meanings (here numbered 1 and 2a). In modern use both comparison and modification are widespread and standard but are **confined** to the extended senses 2b and 3. When sense 1 or sense 2a is intended, unique is used without qualifying modifiers.

When I use the word unique or uniqueness today I am using it in the sense of the original meaning. Something is unique if it is the only one, being without a like or equal.

#### **The approach to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ:**

1. Jesus claimed to be the only way to the only God. (Jn 14:6) UNIQUE
2. Jesus lived a life that changed the world He lived in, and that change radiated out into all the centuries that followed, even down to today. UNIQUE
3. Jesus loved like no one ever had. UNIQUE
4. Jesus' empty tomb is the authority that gives proof to a unique message which proclaims a unique God. UNIQUE

#### ***Jesus claimed to be the only way to the only God.***

Jesus time on earth is coming to a close and He begins to prepare His disciples for his eminent departure.

#### **John 13:37-38 (NASB)**

[37] Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." [38] Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.

After that stark revelation of truth about who they would become in the next few days, Jesus comforts them. Not only would Peter deny that he knew Jesus but all of them would forsake Him and cower in fear because they had been associated with Him. Listen to Jesus' comforting words.

### John 14:1-6 (NASB)

[14:1] "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. [2] "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. [3] "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. [4] "And you know the way where I am going." [5] Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" [6] Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but **through Me**. (The Greek word for **through** here means a way. It speaks "Of place implying motion, through a place..." **CWS-NT**) (In other words, Jesus is the unique place where we may enter into the Kingdom of God. **dgb**)

### Matthew 7:13-14 (NASB)

[13] "Enter **through** the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter **through** it. [14] "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

There are many scriptures that proclaim this uniqueness of our Lord and God.

In his book *Jesus Among Other Gods*, Ravi Zacharias says; "All religions are not the same. All religions do not point to God. All religions do not say that all religions are the same. At the heart of every religion is an uncompromising commitment to a particular way of defining who God is or is not and accordingly, of defining life's purpose. Anyone who claims that all religions are the same betrays not only an ignorance of all religions but also a caricatured view of even the best-known ones. Every religion at its core is exclusive. ...the cry for openness is never what it purports to be. What the person means by saying, 'You must be open to everything' is really, 'You must be open to everything that I am open to and anything that I disagree with, you must disagree with too.' ...All-inclusive philosophies can only come at the cost of truth. And no religion denies its core beliefs."

To those who proclaim a message of tolerance, Jesus stands in stark contrast. Not only in the content of His message but also in the actions of His daily living. He is the only way, to the only God. God is unique and He has created each of us unique. God is our uniqueness.

***Jesus lived a life that changed the world.***

That change radiated out into all the centuries that followed, even down to today. God truly did something different, something unexpected, something unique. He sent His Son to earth, to interact with His creation. The climax of that life, and the change it brought, are seen in an old rugged cross. And at the foot of the old rugged cross stands a man of the world that would never be the same again. He is the picture of the change that would come to the world.

### Mark 15:33-39 (NASB)

[33] When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth

hour. [34] At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" [35] When some of the bystanders heard it, they began saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah." [36] Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down." [37] And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. [38] And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. [39] When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (This centurion believed at the sight of the manner and attitude in which Jesus died.)

This centurion was not a simple and compassionate man. He was a trained killer, but standing at the foot of this old rugged cross where his latest victim had just lost the last breath of his life, the centurion is shaken to the core of his being. His testimony is unmistakable, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" Jesus' life testimony not only changed the lives of His disciples and this hardened killer, it changed the world. Today, nearly 2000 years later, Jesus is changing the lives of people in every culture and with every religious background.

***Jesus loved like no one ever had.***

This change came in the form of a four letter word – LOVE. The real mark of Jesus' love is the love He shows to all men and women who are sinners, for He loves those who have rebelled against Him. He truly loves his enemies...

### **Luke 23:33-46 (NASB)**

[33] When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. [34] But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. [35] And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." [36] The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, [37] and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" [38] Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

[39] One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" [40] But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? [41] "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." [42] And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" [43] And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

[44] It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, [45] because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. [46] And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR

**HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT."** Having said this, He breathed His last. (Jesus gave forgiveness to the angry crowd that called out for his death and mocked Him all along the way. Jesus promised eternal life to the criminal beside Him. This is what the centurion saw, this is what changed his life, he was a first hand witness to the love of Christ for His enemies.)

***Jesus' empty tomb is the authority that gives proof to a unique message which proclaims a unique God.***

"Professor J. P. Moreland presented circumstantial evidence that provided strong documentation for the Resurrection. First, the disciples were in a unique position to know whether the Resurrection happened, and they went to their deaths proclaiming it was true. Nobody knowingly and willingly dies for a lie. Second, apart from the Resurrection, there's no good reason why such skeptics as Paul and James would have been converted and would have died for their faith. Third, within weeks of the Crucifixion, thousands of Jews became convinced Jesus was the Son of God and began following him, abandoning key social practices that had critical sociological and religious importance for centuries. They believed they risked damnation if they were wrong. Fourth, the early sacraments of Communion and Baptism affirmed Jesus' resurrection and deity. And fifth, the miraculous emergence of the church in the face of brutal Roman persecution "rips a great hole in history, a hole the size and shape of Resurrection," as C. F. D. Moule put it.", [Lee Strobel, The Case for Faith]

There is more proof and documentation for the resurrection of Christ than for any other accepted fact of antiquity. No other event in ancient history has been as closely scrutinized as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All of the research shows only one reasonable conclusion – Jesus tomb is empty. Jesus is the unique way to the unique God. There is no other way and there is no other God.

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**CWS-NT** - Complete Word Study of the New Testament.

**CWS-OT** - Complete Word Study of the Old Testament.

- Both the **CWS-NT** and the **CWS-OT** are parts of the AMG Complete Word Study Dictionary - Based on the lexicon of Edward Robinson (as revised by Alexander Negriz and John Duncan), with constant reference to and citations from the works of John Parkhurst and Hermann Cremer.

**DICTIONARY** – Merriam-Webster 11<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Inc., Copyright © 2003 by Merriam-Webster

**(dgb – Personal comments)**