**Subject for this morning is the impact of the resurrection on great commission.**

Begin with quote from Braaten setting the footing for this address: *Without the Light of the Easter morning, the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth would probably have remained eclipsed forever by the blackout of Friday noon.*

What Braaten is saying is that without the resurrection there is no mission; not then, not today. There is no mission for the disciples without the resurrection and there’s no mission for us today either. The resurrection is the basis for the proclamation of the gospel.

But look to the Anglican church today: Presumably, many still remember bishop David Jenkins who publicly denounced the resurrection in the 1980-ies; he denied that Jesus really rose from the dead and believed it was a story. A story that grew and developed into meaning that the message of Jesus is alive, not Jesus Himself. Unfortunately, he was not the only bishop to deny this. Another bishop name John Spong, later wrote a book about the resurrection and said the same as Jenkins; Jesus is only resurrected in our imagination and is only a spiritual reality at best.

But, not only bishops doubt or deny the resurrection, even so do many Anglican clergy today. In a survey conducted by the World Anglican in 2019, it showed that 1/3 of all clergy in the Anglican Church don’t believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. No surprise then to see that ½ of all clergy don’t believe in Jesus Christ as the only route to salvation.

Anglican leaders who do not believe in the resurrection are lamentable people. This are not my words, but that of Paul. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15: If Christ has not been raised our preaching is useless and so is your faith…..if only for this life we have hope in Christ we are to be pitied more than everybody else.

The 1st century church always proclaimed the death of Christ together with His resurrection. See Acts 2:23-28; 3:15, 24-26; 4:10; 5:30-32; 10:39-40; 13:33-37

All Gospel writers first mention the empty tomb, before narrating Jesus’ appearances. Some believe it is to counter the argument Jesus’ body was stolen instead of Jesus being resurrected from the dead. But, we can take it even a step further. If Jesus would not have been resurrected from the dead, the NT would never have been written at all.

Before Jesus appeared to the disciples it says in John’s Gospel they were behind locked doors in fear of the Jews. Only after the disciples met the risen Christ they unlocked the doors and went out becoming bold preachers and witnesses of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. All what Jesus ever did was written down and preached, only because He was alive. A dead Jesus is a dead gospel, not worth to be written down.

Resurrection from the dead, as was preached by the apostles, was never mentioned in the days of the apostles. A bodily resurrection was both alien to Jew and Greek.

Jews believe in a last day, when the Messiah comes and will judge each individual. How that involves the resurrection remains unclear. Already in Jesus’ time there was a disagreement between the Sadducees and Pharisees about the resurrection. And even up to today there’s not much Jewish theology on the resurrection. Interesting in this debate is a book published in 1983 by dr. Pinchas Lapide. Lapide was a Jewish theologian, Israeli historian and Consul. Pinehas wrote many books and studies and in his book; *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective* he wrote: ‘I accept the resurrection of Jesus not as an invention of the community of disciples, but as an historical event.’ Pinehas maintains that life after death is part of the Jewish faith experience, and that it is Jesus' messiahship, not his resurrection, which marks the division between Christianity and Judaism. Are we heading into a time that Jewish theologians have more faith in the resurrection, than many of our modern clergy and bishops in our churches?

For the Greek/Roman world it was even more absurd. Speaking about a bodily resurrection was unheard of. See for example Paul’s monologue in Athens on the Areopagus in Acts 17: ‘Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, but others said; ‘We will hear you again about this’, so Paul went out from among them.

Against this background it’s understandable that in John’s gospel the disciples leave the empty tomb without any excitement, or joy, or motivation to witness/evangelise. Simply, because they did not understood the scriptures nor God’s plan to resurrect Jesus from death. Mary going to the tomb (with spices only in Mark and Luke, but not in John) emphasises this, because she expected a corpse not a risen Christ. In John’s gospel it only says she went to the tomb, which was in accordance to the custom of women for beloved ones to wail and lament at the tomb.

The disciples only gained insight in the scriptures, and understand the events in Jesus’ life, after the resurrection. We read in John 2:22 where it says: ‘When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken’. This once the more proves that only after the resurrection of Jesus they begun to believe in all else Jesus had said and how He was the Christ sent by God in accordance to the Bible.

The resurrection is somehow the trigger that makes all what Jesus had said and done to be true. The resurrection is the evidence of His claims and of His ministry.

And it is only after His resurrection that Jesus says to His disciples: ‘As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you’. The use of the Greek verb for has ‘sent Me’ in the perfect tense, means the sending continues. The sending continues through you and me as is proven in the use of the present tense here saying: Even so I send you’. Jesus disciples don’t start a new work, but they continue the work Jesus begun after His resurrection. And that work continues with us. All who believe in Jesus Christ and in His resurrection receive the Holy Spirit and become partakers of the mission of God.

Only the living Christ is able to send the Spirit to be His messengers and to be partakers in the so-called *Missio Dei*, the mission of God. God had sent Jesus Christ and so the living Christ sends us. With a dead Jesus only, we have nothing to say.