

From the Ashes - Resurrection (Easter)

1 Corinthians 15:13-14 - If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

Big Idea: *The centerpiece of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

- The fact that Jesus rose from the dead gives hope to His followers
- That since death was defeated,
- Then there is nothing that cannot be overcome.

As believers, we identify with Jesus in His death by dying to our old self and being raised to new life.

Prayer: *“Some days are so dark it can feel like the end of the rope. Remind us, God, that you have the power to change everything. We need the resurrection of Jesus to be a reality in our lives. Bring life where there is death. Bring order where there is chaos. **Bring hope where there is despair.**”*

Intro: It's EASTER Sunday: **He is Risen!**

If you're a new believer, you should know that Easter is far and away the **most important Christian day** of remembrance.

- It's a day when ***we celebrate the empty tomb - Christ's resurrection*** from the dead!
- We have *the benefit of knowing how* the story ended 2000 years ago,
- But for those *first disciples*, **much of what they experienced** was an **earth-shaking, deeply painful disappointment.**

You see, there were many who believed that the Messiah would come as a **conqueror and re-establish** the Jewish nation by overthrowing all her enemies.

Historically speaking, many thought *the Messiah would be a king like David or Joshua...* So, *you can imagine the disillusionment when* **Jesus didn't even put up a fight on the night He was arrested.** **And if this wasn't bad enough,**

- **Jesus died...alone, crucified, and humiliated on a Roman Cross.**
- It would be impossible to imagine how **devastated and disappointed** those early disciples were.
- In fact, I can't even think of an illustration or example to share with you to say, **"It was like this..." The truth is *it was horrible*.**
- It was worse than horrible...***it was hopeless*.**

Thankfully, **hopelessness isn't where the story ends**. Let's look at **Luke 24**.

I. The Tomb Was and Is Empty

Luke 24:1-6 - *"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? **He is not here; he has risen!**"*

"He is not here; he has risen!"

- What do you think the women were thinking at this moment?
- Bewilderment is probably an understatement, but it's a good start.
- Thankfully the angels who were also at the tomb remind them that **Jesus said** he must, ***"be crucified and on the third day be raised again."***
- And from there, the women were so excited **they ran back to tell everyone else.**

Like I said earlier, we know **how this story ends** and how things play out...

- But **the empty tomb** is worth noting.
- It's worth getting excited about and it's **definitely worth telling others**.

The empty tomb is and will always be a definitive reminder **that the body of Christ is gone.**

That He has indeed risen and He's alive!

This truth is so important that **the Apostle Paul tells the Corinthian church;**

1 Corinthians 15:13-14 - *"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."*

- **If the tomb isn't empty**, then everything we're doing here today is pointless.
- **But if it is empty**, and Jesus is alive, then we've all got something to get excited about.

II. Hearts Ablaze

Later on, in Luke 24, we pick up the story with 2 disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus;

Luke 24:13-17 - *"That same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. And as they talked and deliberated, Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"*

The story goes on, **Jesus asks more questions**, and eventually, the disciples convince Jesus to stay with them for the night in Emmaus;

Luke 24:29-31 - *"So He went in to stay with them. While He was reclining at the table with them, He took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus—and He disappeared from their sight."*

He just up and vanishes...

- Let's just say it's been an interesting day for **all the disciples**.

Listen to what Luke records them saying to one another after Jesus disappears.

Luke 24:32-33 - *“They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us as He spoke with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem.”*

An encounter like this will set the heart ablaze.

The absolute joy and excitement these disciples must’ve felt to know their Savior was alive is hard to imagine.

- But here’s the thing, **it got them moving**.
- In fact, **they got up that hour and headed back to Jerusalem to **share their experience** with the rest of the disciples.**

Just like the women **who encountered Jesus at the empty tomb**, **these guys went immediately** to share the good news.

What news is so good that it sends grown adults running?

- **That Christ lives!**
- That He kept His promise and came back.

III. All the Promises

As the disciples return from Emmaus, they learn that Jesus also appeared to Simon.

Then, as they’re all talking together **Jesus appears in their midst** and asks for something to eat... **He says to all of them;**

Luke 24:44-45 - *“These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”*

Okay, so **how amazing would it be to do a Bible study with Jesus?**

Even better if He opened your mind to understand the scriptures.

Look at what Luke records happening here; Jesus says, ***“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”***

A couple decades later the Apostle Paul reflects on this by giving us **one of the most amazing summaries of the resurrection. He says** -

2 Corinthians 1:20 - “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.”

- **All the promises**, every one of them, find their **“YES”** in Christ.
- **And through Him, we shout AMEN!**
- **To the glory of God.**

Some of my favorite promises are;

- **Redemption from sin**
- **Reconciliation with the Father**
- **Peace and rest**
- **Healing/Wholeness**
- **An eternal home**
- **No more tears, pain, or sickness**
- **Constant presence**
- **Friendship**
- **Life from death**

IV. Life from Death - It’s a paradox, but From Jesus’ death comes new life.

- **Not** just breathing, **not** just skimping by, but **abundant thriving**.
- **The fullness of life.**
- Even through your darkest night.
- Through your pain, brokenness, and sin.
- Through your striving, planning, and controlling.
Christ redeems it all, uses it all, and sees it all.

To illustrate this point, **I want to jump into the story of Job**, found in the Old Testament.

If you're not familiar with the general premise, **Job is a righteous man with a thriving family.**

Through a series of events,

- He loses everything and even his friends begin accusing him of having some hidden sin that he needs to confess.
- **Their conclusion** is that **this must be the cause for Job's misfortune.**
- **Job continues to assert his innocence** and demands a **"hearing with God"** where he can plead his case.

He eventually gets what he asks for. God comes to speak directly to Job and it's **terrifying - awe-inspiring - and gracious.** (Job 38-42)

About halfway through the discourse **Job says;**

Job 40:4-5 - *"Behold, I am insignificant. How can I reply to You? I place my hand over my mouth. I have spoken once, but I have no answer—twice, but I have nothing to add."*

And then, **finally, Job says something absolutely breathtaking;**

Job 42:2-6 - *"I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*

*You asked, '**Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?**'*

Surely, I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

*"You said, '**Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.**'*

My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

*Therefore, **I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.**"*

Job thought he had heard and learned all he needed to know of God.

Through his pain, suffering, and loss he'd made assumptions and even accusations against the Creator of the universe.

- **What he thought he knew of God changed –**
- **When he came face to face with Him and had his eyes opened to the majesty and providence of the Lord in every facet of life.**

And he says, ***“I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”***

What Job is communicating here is this...

- **I was wrong and now I see.**
- I take comfort here in the dust and ashes, the rubble of my life.

Job was only able to say that because he had an encounter with the living God.

The encounter changed his perspective and even the trajectory of his life.

The story ends with **God restoring all that Job had lost** plus more!

- **More sons, daughters, livestock, respect and honor in his community.**

God gave Job abundant life and raised him from the ashes of destruction.

CLOSE: As we close out another Easter and draw an end to our series, I want to ask you to reflect on the past several weeks ***we've grown in the faith and knowledge of Jesus*** together.

He is the source, the promise, the way, the truth, and the life.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ turned eleven men who were utterly defeated into a bold completely committed band of witnesses.

From the time of these true believers in Jesus Christ, to the present day, the message of the resurrected Jesus has been proclaimed.

His resurrection power is available to us today!

In many ways, our world is living under the same conditions as those discouraged, depressed, and defeated disciples were from Friday to Resurrection Sunday.

The power and the presence of God is with us because Jesus is alive today.

In Him, by faith, we have victory over Sin, we have the assurance of eternal life.

Faith brings dynamic power. The Apostle Paul wrote to the concerning the great desire of his life, he said,

Philippians - 3:10 “I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection.”

It was in the power of the risen Christ that the early Christians went forth to change the world and we are called to do the same.

- Do you feel you have a weak faith?
- Have you surrendered yourself completely to the risen Jesus?
- Do you need God to help you to change your life?
- Jesus Christ is living. He's alive.
- He has risen from the dead.

Through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection God made possible the forgiveness of sinners and their sin.

This Resurrection Sunday, put your faith, put your trust in Jesus, the risen Lord and Savior.

Trust the One who loved you so much He was willing to die for you.

- Trust the One who has conquered death and the grave.
- Christ alone deserves to be the Lord of our lives.