



EASTER SUNDAY THE RESURRECTION OF HOPE

April 21, 2019

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BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

TEXT(S): *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! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' "Then they remembered his words.*

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened." **(Luke 24:1-12)**

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls." **(1 Peter 1:3-9)**

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **(1 Cor 15:21-26)**

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God." **(1 Peter 1:18-21)**

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The resurrection isn't just a symbol or a philosophy. If the resurrection wasn't real, the rest of Christianity is meaningless, beyond its ethics. If Jesus rose from the dead, then there is a Lord of all and everything Jesus said is true. With resurrection, all things are possible! The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us; that is evidence of an empty tomb.

The dominant characteristic of the resurrection story is that no one expected it to happen. In the midst of unbelief, Peter leans into doubt, running to the tomb. Even when Peter sees it's empty, he doesn't immediately believe. The skepticism and disbelief of Jesus' followers is actually documented. Easter *includes* leaning into doubt, running to the tomb to look. In Scripture, hope is looking forward to something with confidence, or the thing or person in whom our expectations for the future are centered. There is hope in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

*"I knew about God
but I didn't know God.
The Woman at the Well
didn't know it all but
she knew God."*

-Pastor Randy

If you have no hope, you have given way to despair because you believe that nothing can change. People cannot live without hope. Over the last three years, the average life expectancy has decreased due to illnesses of despair (alcoholism, opioid addiction, and suicide). The hope of this world is for passing things, but Christ offers living hope, even in the midst of pain and suffering.

The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard said that if there were nothing eternal in a man, he could not despair. In other words, if we were just a bundle of instincts and appetites, we would not despair. It is because we are human that we have the capacity for both despair and hope, but it is because of Jesus' resurrection that we have hope. The hope of the Christian is in the resurrected Lord Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon?
Why was it significant to you?
2. What was your high/low for this past week (or since group last met)?
What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?
3. Last time we met, we talked about [whatever you talked about]. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? Has it has an impact on your life in anyway?
4. What is one thing that you're looking forward to this week?
What's one that you are dreading?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. The two men asked the women at the tomb why they came to look for the living among the dead (Lk 25:4). Where do you think they would have looked for Jesus had they expected him to be alive?
2. Which parts of Luke's account in chapter 24 undergird your conviction that the resurrection was a historical event that actually took place?
3. What does Peter see when he arrives at the tomb? If the body of Jesus had been stolen, would he have seen this? Why or why not?
4. How does Peter describe the inheritance that awaits Christians?
5. How did the women respond when the angels told them the good news?
How did the apostles first respond when the women told them the good news?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. The two men asked the women at the tomb why they came to look for the living among the dead (Lk 25:4). How do we likewise look for Jesus in the wrong places?
2. When Peter wrote 1 Peter, Christians were being persecuted for following Jesus. Peter was later martyred for his faith. How did understanding our inheritance in light of Jesus' resurrection supply Peter with the hope he needed?

**DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS,
CONT.**

3. What does the world have to place their hope in? Where is hope found apart from Jesus?
How does living hope in Jesus compare to other things people hope in?
4. What encouragement do you take from 1 Peter 1:3-9? In what ways does hope for the future change each day that we live?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. If you believe Jesus rose from the dead, that means that his teachings can be taken seriously. Which of Jesus' teachings are you most challenged by?
2. If resurrection is real (which it is) which of Jesus' teachings are you most encouraged by?
3. Although Jesus had said beforehand that he would die and be raised three days later, the women when they peered into the empty tomb, did not assume a resurrection, but thought that someone had taken Jesus' body. When have you recently been surprised by God in a moment or season of disappointment?
4. How do we seek "the living among the dead" in our lives? What are some ways in which we seek satisfaction from that which is dead?
5. How would you finish the sentence, "Because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, I can be sure that Jesus is?"

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. How will you live differently this week in light of the living hope we have in Jesus?
2. How will knowing you have an inheritance in heaven affect your behavior when you face trials in this life?