

Easter 2023: Empty Tomb fulfilled Life

1 Corinthians 15:19

- I heard a statistic that said Easter Sunday is the second most attended service in the world behind natural disasters. That means outside of something tragic happening in the lives of most people, the one time that many people will agree to come to church is on Easter Sunday. Why is that? Well I want to talk about that very thing > **what makes Easter Sunday so special?** I believe an appropriate place for us to start is right at the beginning, before the 1st Easter happened.
- **Lk 18:31-34** Jesus had spoken multiple times about His death and resurrection, and each time Jesus told His followers about what would happen to Him in Jerusalem He got more and more explicit. This time He laid out the events showing the clear involvement of the Gentiles in His trial and death, this was important because Luke didn't want his readers to think that the Gentiles were guiltless in Jesus death, as the whole world was guilty of the death of the Savior.
- Upon hearing this the disciples didn't understand any of it, they had heard this multiple times and yet none of it registered why? Because their minds were filled with other ideas about the Messiah > 1st they expected Jesus to deliver them from the oppression of Rome, 2nd they thought Jesus would usher in His Kingdom Rule where they the Jews would be the focal point of the world. Its amazing how when we have wrong perspectives of Jesus it has to do with how He deals with us, and if not corrected it will blind us as to what He's doing in everything else.
- I don't want you to miss this, Jesus clearly explains His betrayal, His rejection, His death, and His resurrection, and yet it went right over their heads, through their ears, past their understanding. Today its no difference, for as long as I have been alive and you also, Easter has come and gone, and still for most people its just another holiday on the ole calendar. It's a time for families to get together, make the obligatory call to a loved one who you rarely talk to, dress up, have Easter dinner, maybe go to church, this is how the world views Easter today, not us, the world.
- Personally I believe its much more difficult to focus for **1** day on something that you've ignored the whole year, its like in a marriage if a husband doesn't pay attention to his wife all year but tries and make it up on their anniversary no matter how well thought out and planned it is it doesn't remove the damage of the **12** previous months. Which is why for the believer since we haven't ignored Christ, His Word, His people, fellowship, it's more of a celebration of how believers have lived all year and not a time of catchup, it protects us from seeing Easter as a time of make believe or a fairy tale, its something that is real and essential to our faith.
- This brings me to our study verse > **1Cor 15:19**- if Jesus was not raised from the dead and only in this life do we have hope in Him, then we are of all people most miserable why? **1Cor 1:18** then the message of the cross is foolishness and the unsaved is right, as those who reject it state, for all the people who have over the centuries suffered and sacrificed, then it all would have been for a lie, therefore they can only be pitied and not saluted. This is why people attack the resurrection, because it would tear the heart right out of the gospel message leaving it empty, lifeless, useless, because its object and focus would be on a **dead man** and not a **Risen Savior**.

- Which is why Satan and all who reject the gospel work feverishly to discredit the resurrection because if Jesus is still dead then how can He be living and interceding for us in glory. That would mean my sins are still unforgiven, and I have no hope beyond this world, and when I die I won't go and be with the Lord, or see those who also believed, whom I love that have gone before me, so instead of comfort I only experience emptiness. We have an example of this in scripture found in **Acts 24:13-35**- commonly called "**the road to Emmaus**".
- **V13-16** Emmaus is less than ten miles from Jerusalem and two men are traveling to it and talking about Jesus and all that has transpired over the weekend and probably the past three years. As we are going to see they are disappointed, dejected, empty, as they had put their trust in Jesus being their Messiah, and now to them He's just dead, and so are all their hopes. For them they didn't know that Jesus had resurrected, that He was alive, so Jesus decides to join them, but they didn't recognize Him, for their eyes were restrained spiritually.
- Unless the Lord allows us to see and hear are vision remains blurry, our hearing dull, and we can't even tell if the Lord is walking or talking with us. Notice it says as they talked that they "**reasoned**" they were pondering and thinking about the things that were heaviest on their hearts, and that's when Jesus joins them, The Lord's timing is impeccable isn't it! Don't ever think He doesn't care, He knows when to intervene and when to wait before coming to us.
- **V17-24** you have to love the response of Cleopas "**are you from out of town**" actually Jesus could have said "**I Am**" but that may have given it away. Notice Cleopas recounts all the events that have happened from Jesus public ministry, to the betrayal of the religious rulers, to the crucifixion, and the empty tomb, he even included how they had hoped that He would be The One Who Redeemed Israel, but sadly that is not the case. He mentioned everything except what Jesus said He'd do the third day, even though Jesus repeatedly had said "**He would rise again**".
- Without the resurrection notice these men thought all that they believed, all that was done, all that they had hoped, was useless, empty, all for nought, the resurrection makes everything else relevant, real, it's the very thing that makes the impossible possible for the believer. **V25-27** Jesus calls them "**foolish ones**" because they **allowed** their hearts to doubt, we think that the main obstacles to belief is in the head, but they are actually in the heart, which is why scripture so often describes the depravity in the heart, how hard and wicked our hearts are.
- Jesus begins to take them back to the Word of God how it was prophesied that the Messiah would suffer, be betrayed, and ultimately rise again, but they hadn't seen this in scripture until Jesus showed them. We need the Lord to teach us, to show us, because if not we'll miss so many things that are right in front of us > **Zech 12:10**- talks about the sadness after the crucifixion.
- **V28-31** as they came near to Emmaus they wanted to hear more so they invited Jesus to join them for a meal, and when He took the bread and "**blessed**" "**broke**" and "**gave**" their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Is that not like the Lord, he blessed them, it broke them, and it gave them clarity and understanding, and their eyes as well as their hearts were opened.

- **V32-35** once eyes are opened and hearts are burning you can believe mouths and feet are going to be moving, as your soul knows this is my Savior, and you can't wait to tell someone what the Lord has done and shown you. Remember it all started with the Word of God, as He takes the **Bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it**, to us, now we go and do he same for others. **V33-35** they travel all the way back to Jerusalem and tell everyone that the Lord is indeed alive and they get mutual confirmation that He also appeared to Peter, this folks was the first Easter.