

SAFE SPACE for Recoverers

Easter is everything. On a Friday afternoon in 33 CE after Jesus was wrongfully detained, not given due process to plead his innocence, beaten, jailed, and sentenced to death, he was lynched just outside Jerusalem's city wall on a hill named Golgotha. The public nature of his death was a warning to his followers – this will be you if you challenge the status quo (even if it's killing you). It worked - most of the disciples cowered in fear as Jesus was dying. But something happened Sunday morning. Women supporters of Jesus went to tend to his corpse and discovered an empty tomb. They were met by messengers from God telling them that Jesus was some resurrected, no longer dead. Multiple encounters of resurrection were experienced by Jesus' early followers. Because they interpreted this as God's welcome and vindication of Jesus, their faith was emboldened. They left their hiding places to proclaim "He is risen!" He is risen indeed. The Apostle Paul wrote that Easter is everything. If the resurrection didn't happen, we are to be most pitied among humanity (1 Cor. 15:19).

Easter gives us hope that more awaits us after death. The overwhelming majority of people on the planet believe that Easter's hope is true, emboldened by their own experiences of life that transcends flesh and blood. When we face the subject of death, Easter reminds us that there is hope in the loving, welcoming embrace of God beyond our last breath. The "world" tried to prove Jesus was wrong (and all who followed him) with his execution. Easter reminded them God's love was bigger than whatever the world threw at them – even bigger than death itself.

Easter is about life right now, not just about life after we die. In fact, bigger message of which Easter is a part is that new life is what God offers all the time. Learning and living the faith allows us to shed old, dead ways of life for new, meaningful, rewarding lives. Easter isn't only about resurrection post-grave; it's about resurrection right now. That's the Good News Jesus came to proclaim – God loves us fully, completely, right now, just as we are, and invites us to discover what life could look like built on that love.

Resurrected life is possible and happens a lot right here at CrossWalk! Did you know that we host **40+ "Resurrection Labs" every week?** You may know them by other names, including Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Al-Anon, Al-Ateen, SAA, ACA, and others. Most people refer to these as "recovery" groups. But what do you think is being recovered? Recovery leads to new life, better than the one before! Death of our false selves giving way to our real, true selves. Transformation. Resurrection!

The Twelve Steps offer perhaps the greatest roadmap to experiencing resurrection long before we die. For many people, nearly dying because of personal addiction or the affects of a loved one's addiction is what wakes them up to their need and desire for resurrection. Resurrection is not a return to the same life, it is growing into a transformed, new life. This is what faith is all about. It is meant to save us from death not only later, but for life at its fullest and best now.

What is encouraged in these many Resurrection Labs that meet at CrossWalk (and all over the world)? It begins with an honest admission that we are all addicted to something – our egos – and some of us to substances or behaviors that are killing us. From there, the Steps walk us through the process of leaning on God's love to help us sort it all out, heal

ourselves, heal our relationships, heal our faith, and eventually land us in a new life where we work to help others heal.

When you support CrossWalk, you support these Resurrection Labs. When you support ***CrossWalk's Capital Campaign: A Shelter in Life's Storms***, you literally ensure that CrossWalk will keep a roof over the heads of these resurrection seekers and a level path leading them to the door.

Have you realized yet that you need the hope Easter provides? May you sense the Spirit of God whispering to you the same truth that wooed Paul into resurrection: there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God that can weave all of your life together in a way that adds up to a whole and lasting life marked by wellbeing. The good, bad, and the ugly can be transformed into something beautiful if we're open and willing to follow. May you find yourself on the Way of Jesus that guides us there for all the rest of our days, right on into the arms of eternity.