

## **Easter Sunday - Jesus Reigns Over All**

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(Easter testimony video)

You know I don't think that it ever gets old hearing how so many people's lives have been completely changed by Jesus Christ. Not just changed a little bit, but just like the bible says. It's like being born again, a new creation, a new person, forgiven and healed.

Good morning and Happy Easter! My name is Brian Coles, I'm one of the pastors here at Petra. We are so thankful to be with you this morning. Thank you for joining us on this very special Sunday.

I'm blessed to have parents who know Jesus. One of the blessings that comes with that is that they share their stories of faith and their life lessons with my children. Earlier this week my kids were retelling me a story that my mom shared with them about a time that she experienced unusual grace and forgiveness. (story about the plates)

We will never speak of this again. I am convinced that there are many of you watching and whoever you are and wherever you may be, God has a message for you. You know you have disobeyed God; he has warned you, he has tried to stop you, and yet you went your own way, and now there is a mess. You've been avoiding him because facing him means facing your failures, facing his disapproval and his punishment. I believe God wants to say something to you today. He wants to say with a little help we can clean this up, and we will never speak of this again.

It's called forgiveness. It's what you need. It's what I need and it's what Easter is all about.

You may be wondering how can I say that? It's because of the resurrection. It's the reason for Easter. This might be hard for some of you, but Easter is not about the egg hunt or the spiral cut ham, although I'll be enjoying both of those things a little later. Easter is about an actual, provable, miraculous event that took place that is documented inside and outside of the bible.

**The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important event in history.**

That's one of the things I love the most about my faith, the Christian faith. We don't force ourselves to believe a bunch of nice sounding rules. We are not playing some big game of pretend with Jesus. Christians don't simply believe in the life and teaching of Jesus but in the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection is everything for Christians in fact without the resurrection our faith doesn't exist.

So why does the resurrection of Jesus matter?

When Jesus rose from the dead it proved that he was God.

**It proved that his claims to be God were true.** He is the true ruler and authority

When Jesus rose from the dead,

**His victory over death was our victory over death.** Jesus lives and so will we live for eternity with him.

When Jesus rose from the dead,

**He broke the curse of sin, breaking its power.** All of humanity can be free from the abusive slavery of sin. You don't have to be stuck anymore.

**1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."**

When Jesus rose from the dead,

**We received the promise of the Holy Spirit.**

**Acts 2:33**

**<sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.**

When Jesus rose from the dead,

**He proved that the wrath of God was satisfied in his sacrifice.** Jesus stepped in into your place and mine to take our punishment for our sin. That means a very real payment was given for your failures. You are forgiven.

**1 John 2:1-3**

**But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup>He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.**

When Jesus rose from the dead,

He proved that he really does reign, **Jesus Reigns Over All**

So, what is this resurrection story? Well, it is a really neat story. All four gospels give eyewitness accounts of the resurrection of Jesus which is neat to hear the same story from four different people's point of view. Luke give times, dates, places, and names of people. This is an invitation to fact check to see for yourself. In the letter of 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul is retelling the story and he says to the church many of these people are still alive, you can ask them yourself.

I think it would be appropriate to read the account of the resurrection. I'm going to read the story from Matthew and John's perspective.

The story starts just after Jesus dies on the cross.

#### **Matthew 27:57-61**

**<sup>57</sup> As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. <sup>59</sup> Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, <sup>60</sup> and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.**

#### **Matthew 28**

**<sup>1</sup> After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.**

**<sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.**

**<sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."**

**<sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.**

#### **John 20:2-20**

**<sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"**

**<sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went**

straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup> as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

(Mary has a personal interaction with Jesus)

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

There are so many things to learn from this story. Probably the least important thing you can learn about the resurrection is that John is faster than Peter. The other disciple was no doubt John in verses 4 and 8.

There have been many people who have tried to disprove the resurrection and at least three of them were atheists when they started and now are not only Christians, but they are the leading defenders of the gospel.

**Frank Morrison - "Who Moved the Stone"**

**Lee Strobel - "The Case for Christ"**

**Josh McDowell - "Evidence that Demands a Verdict"**

**Jesus was a real historical person**

There are almost no credible historians that deny that Jesus Christ was a real living breath person who was a teacher and had a following.

**Jesus died by crucifixion**

There is not one historical record of anyone ever surviving a roman crucifixion. Gerd Ludemann, atheist scholar, said historically it's indisputable that Jesus was dead.

**The Messiah was not supposed to die**

The Jewish culture did not see the Messiah as someone who would die but someone who would rule politically and militarily. If you were starting a movement this was not the way to do it.

### **Jesus was placed in the tomb**

The Roman guard was given the seal and protect the tomb. The seal meant what was supposed to be in there was in there. A “watch” was anywhere from 10 to 30 heavily armed guards, who would rotate sleeping to provide 24-hour protection.

### **The tomb was empty**

The opponents even admitted that tomb was empty. They had to blame the disciples for taking it.

### **Women were the first witnesses**

If they were starting a movement, they would have never in their culture used women as the first eyewitnesses. This is an unfortunate reality of biblical times.

### **The drastic shift in the Disciples behavior**

They went from being afraid to fearlessly preaching that they had seen Jesus. To the point of death, all of them but one died for their faith. You might get one or two people to die for a lie but not almost all of them.

### **The explosion of the church**

How could the church have exploded so close to the scene of the event if it wasn't true? This death had just happened. The tomb was right down the street.

### **James the brother of Jesus**

James the brother of Jesus who did not believe in him through our Jesus's life suddenly starts following Jesus and calling him Lord after the resurrection. What would your older brother have to do to convince you he was God?

### **Appearances of Jesus**

Jesus met with the disciples on many occasions after his resurrection. At one point he showed himself to over 500 people.

### **The life change of the Apostle Paul**

Paul was the number one hater of the Christian church, but after he sees Jesus, he not only becomes a Christian but wrote most of the new testament.

We could spend a lot of time talking about the proofs of the resurrection. I highly encourage you to investigate. It's actually a lot of fun. But I want to look at one of the final things Jesus says to the disciples before he ascends into heaven. He tells them the purpose of all of this.

### **Luke 24:46-48**

**<sup>46</sup> He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things.**

**The point of all of this is for repentance and forgiveness.**

The point is to prove once and for all that Jesus was really God. He is our rightful ruler and king. He is the way, the truth and the life. Repentance means turning from our way to follow his. It means being sorry for living a lie and starting to live by his true standards. Forgiveness means a fresh chance and a new start. It's a new life in him. There is nowhere else to look. No other person no other way of life, no other religion comes even close to the real pathway to righteousness.

**"A great many people want to bring their faith, their works, their good deeds to Him for salvation. Bring your sins, and He will bear them away into the wilderness of forgetfulness, and you will never see them again." - Dwight L. Moody**

**"There are some facts that will never change. One fact is that you are forgiven. If you are in Christ, when he sees you, your sins are covered-he doesn't see them. He sees you better than you see yourself." Max Lucado**

**"You have been forgiven, so act like it!" A.W. Tozer**

I'd like to close with an impression I had on my heart as I was praying for you.

Some of you watching struggle with accepting Jesus because something happened to you. You are unable to forgive someone in your life who hurt you. Maybe it was a parent or a sibling, maybe it was someone in the church. The rules for punishment and forgiveness are the same for all of us.

Almost everyone would agree that people who do bad things should be punished. People who break the law and people who break moral laws.

The problem is when we realize that we have broken the law I know I have, so what do we do?

It's easy to be on board for forgiveness when it applies to me but sometimes I'm a little slower when it has to do with someone who has hurt me.

The bible says that God does not let people get away with these crimes. He is both loving and just. There are two ways according to scripture that your sin and my sin can be punished. The first is that you and I receive the punishment. The cost is eternal separation from God. The second is that Jesus pays, he takes the punishment for us on the cross.

Either you pay or Jesus pays. Either that person who hurt you pays or Jesus pays for them. God says, "vengeance is mine declares the Lord. I will repay."

It's time to let it go. The wait of your sin and the shame that comes with it. And the weight you have been carrying to the sin of those who have hurt you. Give it to him. You can trust him with it.

I am convinced that there are many of you watching and whoever you are and wherever you may be, God has a message for you. You know you have disobeyed God. He has warned you, he has tried to stop you, and yet you went your own way, and now there is a mess. You've been avoiding him because facing him means facing your failures, facing his disapproval and his punishment. I believe God wants to say something to you today. He wants to say with a little help we can clean this up, and we will never speak of this again.

### **Closing Song**

If you have any question, one of our pastors, Pastor Brian Flewelling, is going to be available to answer questions on our Facebook page following the service. You can meet him there.

Starting Monday, April 13, at 10 a.m. on Petra's Facebook Live, join Pastor Brian Flewelling as he reads through 25 psalms in 25 days. He'll read through a psalm and pull out a devotional idea each day.

Also starting Wednesday, April 15, from 7-8 p.m. you can join a weekly Zoom Bible Study led by Petra Pastor Brian Flewelling. Take a journey through selected chapters from the book of Exodus as the nation of Israel finds freedom from bondage and as you discover God's plan for your freedom today.

Prayer