

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Easter Sunday • Week of April 5

Introduction - Happy Easter!

The black is off the cross and colorful fragrant flowers replace the stains of death. This is a day of celebration for Christians around the world – the some 2.6 billion who have said yes to Christ, and declare Jesus Christ is Lord! ... and the number is growing. Easter is a holy time, and a high historical moment, as in the Apostles' Creed we declare:

"...He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell (place of the dead). He rose again on the third day and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty!..."

If Christ had not been raised from death, there would be no Church family (*ecclesia*); no community of faith; we would not celebrate Christmas, nor commemorate Good Friday. But because Christ did rise from death, his bodily resurrection forever proves He IS who He says He IS, the victorious Son of God. Our hope of resurrection and new life begins now!

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55, NKJV).

It is no wonder, then, on Easter Sunday we get dressed up. We adorn ourselves with new clothes, a new suit, colorful new dress, new shirt, trousers, or shoes. We decorate Easter Eggs with the children, plan a special meal, beautify our homes or yards, and spruce up church property with fresh mulch and flowers. We may go so far as to spring-clean. There is something within each of us that wants to be new, for things to be beautiful and clean.

Background

What do we do when we can't make things clean and new? When areas of our lives have gone so wrong, we feel surrounded by filth? Perhaps today you feel dirty, irredeemable, even dead, as the shrapnel of a relational explosion has caused death in your home. Sometimes it seems the more we try to get clean on our own, the more wholeness eludes us. May the Lord bring us to a point we

realize we cannot save ourselves. Lord, we acknowledge only you can redeem our dirtiness. We resonate with the prophet Isaiah:

"... We are constant sinners; how can people like us be saved. We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:5b-6a).

Discussion:

- What do you do with your 'dirty rags'? How do you resonate with Isaiah's words?
- Perhaps there has been a time you felt good enough to get into heaven on your own. Perhaps you are there now. What do the following Scriptures say about this mindset?
Isaiah 53:6 Psalm 14:2-3 Jeremiah 17:9-10 Romans 3:22-23
- What does Good Friday mean to you? What does Easter mean to you?
- How does the stain of sin keep us separated from a holy loving Father?
- What has Jesus done on our behalf?

Further consideration

Throughout the New Testament, there are people who experience wholeness once they encounter Jesus. Most of them certainly felt dirty and irredeemable initially. Yet Jesus brings each one to a point of truth, a realization of their need for a Savior. As soon as they are transformed, they tell others. We see this as Jesus interacts with such individuals as the woman at the well when she tells her village *Come meet a man!...* (John 4:29-30); the woman with the issue of blood when Jesus stops to see who touched him (Luke 8:42b-48); the demoniac who went into all the Decapolis to tell his story (Mark 5:18-20). People who humbly admit their deep need are the ones Jesus makes whole and they go public! But those who feel they have no sin, go away sorrowful (Mark 10:17-22). Do you acknowledge your need for a risen Savior? The most important question you will ever answer is:

Who is Jesus Christ to me?

Read Luke 24:1-12

The Good News of Christ's resurrection is not nonsense. Surely Simon Peter at least exemplified a measure of faith by running to the tomb to see the place where the body of Jesus had been. When he peered in, he saw 'empty linen wrappings' ... perhaps informing us no more dirty rags. For now, the risen Christ will robe us in fine white linen (Revelation 19:8). Notice the angels' words to the women:

“Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day” ... then they remembered (Luke 24:5b-8a).

In all other religions of the world, entry into ‘heaven’ (bliss or nirvana) is based on *what you do* – works, human effort, keeping the law, or self-abuse. Only in Christianity is perfect love and full salvation expressed through a personal love relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, based on what has already been done for you! Friend, Jesus Christ paid a price you could never pay. He was (*and is*) the only One qualified to accomplish such a task and keep you from falling away. Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, *and* the birth of HIS CHURCH is the apex of human history. The question is: Will you accept this gift or will you walk away?

Closing Discussion and Reflection:

All other religions have humans trying to get to God. Christianity is about God becoming flesh and dwelling among us (pitching his tent among us, as in the days of the Tabernacle).

- What does it mean to you that Jesus wants to be *with* and live *in* you each day?

If you have not yet accepted the Lord Jesus into your heart, today is a good day. Jesus Christ is the only person who was raised to life and still lives! And he promises to live with *you* and in *you*, my friend! He is knocking on the door of your heart, so simply invite him in (Revelation 3:20). Will you accept him into your life and publicly declare your decision?

Take a moment and pray now –

Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me. I admit I am a sinner, and I need a Savior.
Lord, please forgive my sin. Save my soul. Wash me clean. Make me whole.
Lord, thank you. Please fill me with your love. Fill me with you Holy Spirit. I receive you now into my heart. Thank you, Lord. In your name I pray, Lord Jesus.
Amen.

Thank him for saving you and giving you the hope of new life. Now go tell someone!

One Year Bible Reading

- Apr. 5: Deuteronomy 28:1-68, Luke 11:14-36, Psalm 77:1-20, Proverbs 12:18
- Apr. 6: Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20, Luke 11:37-12:7, Psalm 78:1-31, Prov. 12:19-20
- Apr. 7: Deuteronomy 31:1-32:27, Luke 12:8-34, Psalm 78:32-55, Proverbs 12:21-23
- Apr. 8: Deuteronomy 32:28-52, Luke 12:35-59, Psalm 78:56-64, Proverbs 12:24
- Apr. 9: Deuteronomy 33:1-29, Luke 13:1-21, Psalm 78:65-72, Proverbs 12:25
- Apr. 10: Deut. 34:1-Joshua 2:24, Luke 13:22-14:6, Psalm 79:1-13, Prov.12:26
- Apr. 11: Joshua 3:1-4:24, Luke 14:7-35, Psalm 80:1-19, Proverbs 12:27-28

Easter Sunday

When the Unredeemed

Text: Luke 11:23-28, Luke 18:18-23, Luke 24:1-12

PLAIN TRUTH:

Sin _____ us from _____ and
from one another.

April 5, 2026