

Easter Sunday

Jesus Has Risen

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

2There 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. **3**His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. **4**The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. **6**He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. **7**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.”

8So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9**Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **10**Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.

Anyone here today feel distant and far away from God?

God does not run from your doubts.

Faith isn't the absence of doubt.

Faith is how you fight through.

Easter proves that death does not win.

You might have areas of your life that feels on the brink of death, but Jesus proves that what we see doesn't have the final say!

Easter means God has always had a plan.

All the way back in Genesis, God started revealing His plan to redeem mankind. He knew human beings were going to be a messed up species, and yet He made us anyway! He made us in His image, knowing that by giving us free choice, we would sin and destroy our relationship with Him.

Ephesians 2

4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5**made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6**And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7**in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9**not by works, so that no one can boast. **10**For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Easter means God's plan worked. The resurrection is God's assurance that the sacrifice Jesus made paid the debt of sin in full. it is proof positive that we have been reconciled and our relationship with God is restored.

Easter means hope for everyone.

You see, God had a plan for mankind from the very beginning; and He has a plan for me and a plan for you. God is willing to go to any length,

even death on a cross, to bring about His plan for mankind, and He will go to any length to bring about His plan for me and for you. God's plan to redeem mankind worked, and so will His plans to redeem and transform me and you. Easter means hope – the kind of hope that I long for, that I'm certain will come about one day – hope of spending eternity with the God I love and who loves me more than I can ever comprehend.

James Stewart tells the story of a painting. It's a painting in which Faust is playing chess with the devil for his soul. Faust has only a few pieces left on the board and seems to be checkmated, and his countenance reveals his sense of doom. And the devil, who seems to be very much in charge of everything, has a kind of glee painted on his face.

Through the years, people come into the gallery where the picture is hung, look up at it, and see the hopelessness of the situation. They go away feeling, to some degree, that the artist has captured their own situation. And then one day, there comes into the gallery a great chess master who stands for hours and stares at the chessboard. Finally, with a shout that disturbs everyone, the chess master says: "It's a lie! The king and the knight still have moves left."

I think sometimes this is what Easter is for us. We stand, and we look at our lives, and we look at the world, and it looks like we are checkmated. **Then Jesus, who God raised up from the dead, stands and looks at our same lives and says, It's a lie. You still have moves left.**

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand." Edward Mote

Jesus was always part of the plan.

Matthew 21

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

But the disciples of Jesus never fully understood what Jesus was talking about. They didn't grasp the plan of God - that Jesus would take our sins upon Himself on the cross; that He would make this ultimate sacrifice so that once and for all our sins could be forgiven when we place our faith in Him. They didn't really understand the gospel message until after Jesus was raised from the dead...

Easter is both a celebration and invitation

If you were worth dying for, he is worth living for!

Our old history ends with the cross; our new history begins with the resurrection.

~ Watchman Nee

Isaiah 53

4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

John 11

25Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; **26**and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

1 Peter 1

3Praise 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, **4**and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you

Romans 5

6You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7**Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. **8**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

General Wellington commanded the victorious forces at the great battle of Waterloo that virtually defeated Napoleon. The story has been told that when the battle was over, Wellington sent the great news of his

victory to England. A series of stations, one within sight of the next, had been established to send code messages between England and the continent. The message to be sent was “Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.” Meanwhile a fog set in and interrupted the message sending. As a result, people only saw news of “Wellington defeated-” Later, the fog cleared and the full message continued, which was quite different from the outcome that the people originally thought had happened! The same is true today. When many look at what happened on Good Friday, the death of Christ, they see only “defeat.” Yet, on Easter, at the Resurrection, God’s message was completed. **The resurrection spelled “victory.”**

Romans 8

31What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32**He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? **33**Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. **34**Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. **35**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **36**As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” *i*

37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, *k* neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39**neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

