

A NEW DAY - In Victory

Icebreaker: How did your family celebrate Easter?

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 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!" (John 20:1-2)

The resurrection and the skeptic: filter the doubt through the evidence...

*"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. **I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.**" (Acts 26:25-26)*

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless...your faith is futile; you are still in your sins...But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead...If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." (1 Cor. 15:13-14, 17, 20, 32b)

Then He said to Thomas... "Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:27-28)

Has skepticism ever played a role in your Christianity? If so how? What skeptical thoughts still permeate you thinking? Have you ever leaned into that in order to find answers?

The resurrection and the Christian: Jesus did the work, we get the win...

- **No fear of death (freedom)** – "Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." (Heb. 2:14-15) – **How would someone's life change if they really didn't fear death?**

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:54)

- **New hope in life (transformation)** – "Praise 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..." (1 Peter 1:3) – **Where do you personally need God to resurrect something dead in your life in order to bring about hope this Easter? How might you go about it?**
- **New purpose to engage (mission)** – "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt. 28:19-20) – **What part do you play in God's mission on earth?**

...(for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe. (1 Tim. 4:10)

Pray about the above points in your life and Happy Easter!