



VICTORY OVER DEATH

It is entirely possible to preach a gospel of the cross while functionally ignoring the empty tomb. We love to talk about the sacrifice, the blood, and the payment for our sins, but as Pastor Steve reminds us, the crucifixion is only part one of the story. If the story ends on Friday, then Jesus is just another tragic martyr, and as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15, "your faith is futile and you are still in your sins". The resurrection is not just an inspirational epilogue to the Easter story; it is the absolute, foundational core of the Christian faith.

Jesus never spoke of His death without also promising His resurrection. The Great Exchange—Christ taking our sin and giving us His righteousness—is only fully realized because the Savior conquered the grave. Because He lives, our faith is sound, we possess the power of the Holy Spirit, we have a continual Advocate before the Father, and we are guaranteed eternal life. As you work through these questions, challenge yourself to not just appreciate the cross, but to live daily in the triumphant reality of the resurrection.

Pastor Steve noted that while believers will lay their physical bodies down, they will never truly die. How does understanding the difference between the death of the flesh and the eternal life of the spirit bring hope when attending a Christian funeral? (OT: Ecclesiastes 12:7 | NT: 2 Corinthians 5:8)

Study Questions:

1. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). If Christ had died for our sins but remained in the grave, how would that prove that the penalty of death was too great even for Him to overcome? (OT: Ezekiel 18:20 | NT: Acts 2:24)
2. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Since none of us were physically present at the resurrection, how do you practically define and live out "faith" today? (OT: Habakkuk 2:4 | NT: 2 Corinthians 5:7)
3. Jesus told His disciples it was to their advantage that He go away so the Helper (Holy Spirit) could come (John 16:7). In what ways is having the indwelling Holy Spirit actually more advantageous than having Jesus physically present on earth? (OT: Joel 2:28 | NT: John 14:16-17)
4. Romans 8:34 asks, "Who is he who condemns?" Since Christ died, rose again, and makes intercession for us, how should you handle the feelings of guilt and condemnation the enemy tries to put on you? (OT: Isaiah 50:8-9 | NT: Romans 8:1)
5. Paul writes that the last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). How does the reality that death has a definitive expiration date change your perspective on aging and illness? (OT: Isaiah 25:8 | NT: Revelation 21:4)