

KNOW-ACT-BE

He is RISEN! He is RISEN indeed!

For centuries, Christians from many races, nations and languages across the globe make this proclamation each Easter. But why ... why would this proclamation last this long? Who is this RISEN one? What difference did he make? How does this one life impact mine?

Uncovering and embracing the answers to the three final questions above are important. They are vital components in forming and growing in Christian faith. Together, they explain *in part why* Christians celebrate Easter by proclaiming our Christ is RISEN all these years later.

Let's explore these questions together.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Angela

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WHO IS THIS RISEN ONE?***The Nicene Creed***

I believe in one God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the one and only Son of God,
of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who, for us and for our salvation,
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit
of the virgin Mary, and was made man,
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried,
and the third day He rose again according to the
Scriptures,

and ascended into heaven,
and sits on the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again,
with glory to judge the living and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of Life;
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy universal and apostolic
Church;
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of
sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

KNOW ... God and his Word.

- The Nicene Creed discusses the three persons of the Godhead (Trinity): God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Discuss what the creed states about each. What stands out to you or new insight do you have about the Godhead?

- The Godhead is beautifully interdependent — all part of God's creating and saving work — yet there is specific focus on Jesus in this creed. Who is Jesus? What does he do and for whom? How does this RISEN one (Jesus) impact humanity's past, present and future?

ACT ... responding to & applying what we know.

In what way(s) does the Nicene Creed stir your thinking? Does it challenge you to grow in your expression of love for God? Explain your answer.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID HE MAKE?

Philippians 2:6-11 (NIV)

⁶Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to
be used to his own advantage;

⁷rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every
name,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ
is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

KNOW ... God and his Word.

- This passage in Philippians has been called the “Christ Hymn” and is the oldest expression in Christian scripture of Christ's identity. Using this hymn, describe the person and character of Jesus. What must it have been like for him to leave heaven and become human? How does Jesus' radical obedience and selflessness change the world?
- From Jesus' day to Paul's and now our current time, empires and governments have always viewed power as something to be embraced with expressions of violence fear, stigmatization and acts of force against her people. But Jesus didn't see power or God's kingdom in that way. What did power look like to Jesus? How does or should the power displayed by Jesus make a difference in the new creation life he brought to earth?

ACT ... responding to & applying what we know.

In what way(s) does this passage stir your thinking? Does it challenge you to grow in your expression of love for God? Explain your answer.

HOW DOES THIS ONE LIFE IMPACT MINE?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)

¹³Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be
uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that
you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who
have no hope. ¹⁴For we believe that Jesus died

and rose again, and so we believe that God will
bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in
him. ¹⁵According to the Lord's word, we tell you
that we who are still alive, who are left until the

coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise

first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

KNOW ... *God and his Word.*

1 Thessalonians is an expression of communal faith. The solid rock of this Christian faith is “that Jesus died and rose again” (v. 14).

- Death is described in different ways. Discuss what death means or looks like from a worldly point of view (i.e. agnostic, Buddhist, Muslim, etc.). How does this passage inform a Christian's (believer's) view of death and what is to come after death?
- What is possible because of Jesus' life, death and resurrection? How does this give believers hope in the here and now? What words/thoughts from these verses encourage you? (v. 18)

ACT ... *responding to & applying what we know.*

In what way(s) does this passage stir your thinking? Does it challenge you to grow in your expression of love for God? Explain your answer.

FINAL THOUGHTS

BE ... *living in light of what we've heard, becoming more like Christ.*

So *why* do Christians celebrate by proclaiming our Christ is RISEN all these years later? Why do you?

Perhaps, Pastor Mark's summation in Sunday's sermon gives voice (in part as) to why.

Easter is not simply a celebration of Jesus being raised from the dead. Easter is a celebration of us being raised from the dead because Jesus was!

Easter is not simply a celebration of Jesus being granted new life after death. Easter is a celebration of us being granted new life because Jesus was.

Easter is not simply a celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Easter is a celebration of ours! We have new life because Jesus had new life.

What better way to share the joy of ***being raised*** and the gift of ***new life*** than to simply say, “He is RISEN. He is RISEN INDEED!”