

“What Difference Does Easter Make”

Text: Luke 24:1-12

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A lot of people say, “I believe in the resurrection. I just don’t understand it.” It wasn’t long ago that George Gallup did a poll and said that even 84% of the people who never go to church, believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

Read of the Jesus’ resurrection from the dead from **Luke 24:1-12.**

PRAY!

Peter went away wondering what had happened. He was leaving the empty tomb of Jesus asking himself, “What does this mean?” Ever since that miraculous day the world has been asking the same question, what does the resurrection of Jesus mean? My colleague, Pastor Rick Warren says, “It means three things:”

1. Jesus is who He claimed to be.
2. Jesus has the power He claimed to have.
3. Jesus does what He promised to do.

I. JESUS IS WHO HE CLAIMED TO BE.

A. John 11:25 – Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life.*

Whoever believes in me will live even though they die.”

1. Jesus made some outrageous claims about himself:
 - I’m God.
 - I’m perfect.
 - I’m the only way to heaven.
 - I’m the savior of the world.
2. Jesus was who he said he was or He was the biggest liar who ever lived. He said, “I am God.” And then He said He would validate who He was.
 - The Bible tells of Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem after he cleared the money changers from the temple.
 - The religious leaders asked him, “What right do you have to do this?”
 - Jesus said, “Because I am God.”
 - They said, “Prove it!”
 - Jesus said, “I will. After you kill me, I’m going to come back to life three days later.”
 - Jesus claimed to be God and His resurrection backs up what He claimed to be.

- B. John 14:6, - Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can get to God the father except by me."*
1. That's a pretty strong claim. Jesus said, *"I am **the** way."*
 - a. He didn't say, "I'm one of the ways." or "All roads lead to heaven." Jesus said He was the **only** way to God.
 - b. He said, *"No one gets to God the Father except by me."*
- C. Jesus is who He claimed to be.**

II. JESUS SHOWS HE HAD THE POWER HE CLAIMED TO HAVE.

- A. Jesus said, *"All power in heaven and earth has been given to me."*
1. Because Jesus was God He could do everything God could do.
- B. In John 10:18, Jesus said, *"Nobody takes my life from me. I have power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again."*
1. No force could keep Him in the tomb.
 - a. The Romans killed Him, put Him in a tomb, they put a big stone in front of the tomb, and then they sealed it with the Roman seal and posted a 24-hour guard.
 - b. Jesus said, *"They can't stop me. I can give My life away and I can take it up again."*

III. JESUS DOES WHAT HE PROMISES TO DO.

- A. Mark 10:34, Jesus said, *"They will mock and flog and kill me but after three days I will come back to life."*
1. The cross was no surprise to Jesus. It was all part of God's plan.
- B. How would you feel if you'd been the guys who put Jesus to death? You publicly executed this man in front of thousands of witnesses who had seen him die. Then you have Him buried, a stone put over the tomb, sealed and a 24-hour guard. Three days later this guy's up and walking around the city again. What do you say if you meet Him on the street?
- C. *"The angel said, 'Don't be frightened. I know you're looking for Jesus who was crucified. He's come back to life again just as He said He would.'"*
1. *"Just as He said He would."* Jesus did what He promised.
 2. When God makes a promise, you can count on it.

Because Jesus did rise, He is who He said He was, He has the power He said He had and He kept the promises that He made.

- **So what?** What difference does Jesus' resurrection mean to me in 2007, here in Oakland, California? It means three things:

1. MY PAST CAN BE FORGIVEN.

- A. That's good news. We all have things we wish we hadn't said, thought things we wish we hadn't thought, and deeds things we wish we hadn't done. We all have regrets. We all feel bad about things. We all have guilt.
- B. A fellow pastor received this letter, ***"I'm 31 years old and divorced, though I fought the divorce bitterly. I feel badly. I have no hope for my future. Often I go home and cry but there's no one holding me when I cry. Nobody cares. Nothing changes and I continue to fail. I'm stressed out emotionally and I feel I'm on the verge of a collapse. Something is very wrong. But I feel so hurt and embittered that I can scarcely react or relate to others any more. I feel as if I'm going to have to sit out the rest of my life in the penalty box."***
- C. The tragedy is, there are a lot of people like this. They can't get on with the present and the future because they're stuck in the past. Some guilt or regret or something has tied them down.
- D. Colossians 3:14 is the good news. ***"He has forgiven all our sins and canceled every record of the debt we owed. Christ has done away with it by nailing it to the cross."***
1. This is God's pardon program. He says He nailed it all to the cross.
 - Jesus paid for my guilt. That means I don't have to pay for it.
 - Jesus was hung for my hang ups. Jesus was nailed to the cross so I can quit nailing myself to the cross.
 - Jesus wants to forgive your past. He's cancelled all your debts.
 - God want to cancel every record of all debts you owe – emotional, relational, sins. Once God has forgiven it, I can forget it. That's good news.
- E. Because Jesus is who He said he was, my past can be forgiven. I don't have to carry a load of guilt around.

2. MY PRESENT PROBLEMS CAN BE MANAGED.

- A. Much of life is unmanageable, especially if you're a parent.
1. Friend with three kids.
- B. Maturity is when you figure out that you can't have it all figured out. I can't control everything in my life, but God can. So I want to connect with Him and let Him control life and ask Him for help.

1. What you hear from a lot of people today is they feel as if life is out of control.
 - I feel powerless to **change the situation**.
 - I feel powerless to **break a bad habit**.
 - I feel powerless to **save a relationship**.
 - I feel powerless to **get out of debt**.
 - I feel powerless to **manage my time and my schedule**.
 2. What you need is a power greater than yourself. You were never meant to live this life just on your own power. God wants to have a relationship with you.
- C. Ephesians 1:20, *“How incredibly great is His power to help those who believe Him, the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead.”*
1. The same power that enabled Jesus to rise from death will help you rise above your problems today and tomorrow. God is in control. He will give you the power to face it.
- D. Philippians 4:13, *“I am ready for anything through the strength of Christ who lives in me.”*
1. God is saying I want to help out. No problem is too big for God. No situation is hopeless if you’ll turn it over to Him.

3. MY FUTURE CAN BE SECURE.

- A. One of the universal problems we all have is death. Everybody dies. I’m going to die someday and so are you. People don’t like to talk about death (invite friends over and talk about death—see what happens). Death is inevitable, so let’s talk about it.
1. Some children were asked about what they believed about death.
 - Stephanie, age 9, said, “Doctors help you so you won’t die until you pay their bill.”
 - Marsha, age 9, said, “When you die, you don’t have to do homework in heaven unless your teacher is there too.”
 - Raymond, age 10, said, “A good doctor can help you so you won’t die. A bad doctor sends you to heaven.”
- B. The fact is everybody has a deep internal longing to know, “What’s going to happen after I die?” We’re going to spend more time on that side of eternity than on this side. When you go to the Bible, what does God say heaven is really like?
1. Heaven is a perfect place. Total love, peace, joy, perfection. No sin, no mistakes, no evil, no bad, no errors. It’s perfect in every area.
 2. In order for you to get there you have to be perfect because only perfect can get in to heaven. That would leave us all out. None of us is perfect, we’ve all messed up.
- C. There are two ways the Bible says you can get to heaven. Plan A is to earn it. That’s the performance plan. To earn it you only have

to never sin, always make the right decision, always say the right thing, never the wrong thing, be perfect.

- D. Since none of us qualify for the first way, God came up with a second way. The second way is to trust Jesus Christ, establish a relationship with Him. By establishing a relationship with him you get in on His goodness.
1. Story of man, son, friends and carnival.
 2. When you get to heaven you'll say, "God, I couldn't get here on my own effort. The only way I can get to heaven is I'm a friend of Jesus Christ."
- E. Jesus said in John 17:3, *"This is the way to have eternal life. By knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ the one He sent to earth."*
1. The Bible says Jesus has already paid your way to heaven.

What do you need to do to have your past forgiven, acquire a new power that would help you manage your present problems and have your future secured?

- You need to say to God, "I'm not good enough for the performance plan. Jesus Christ, I want to trust You, follow You, get to know You and have a relationship." That's how the resurrection makes a difference in your life.

[Video Clip!]

The resurrection of Jesus can make a difference your life.

I want to invite you to know that you're going to heaven, and help you make a commitment to Jesus. Would you **pray** something like this in your heart:
"Jesus Christ, I'm not sure if I'm saved or not. If I'm not, I'm asking You to save me today. I'm putting my total trust in You. I want to follow You, Jesus. Thank You for loving me and dying for me. Help me to understand it more. Amen.

If you prayed this for the first time or recommitted your life to Christ, please let me know or one of our elders in the church so we can celebrate with you.

Some of you don't have a church home. Park Blvd. would love to be your spiritual family. We welcome you here. This is a place for imperfect people. We are committed to helping you learn how to live life now and in eternity.

If you've come this morning and you're overwhelmed by the pressures and stresses of life would you say in your heart, **"Jesus Christ, I want to give You these problems I'm facing. And I want to give You my life – the good, the bad, the ugly. Fill me with Your hope and Your presence and power. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."**