

What's Easter All About?

- Acts 10:39-43

➤ **Wow! What a week we have just celebrated & what a day that we celebrate this Sunday morning. This day is not just any other day that we celebrate, but this is the day that we celebrate our Lord's victorious resurrection from the grave.**

- Church, don't ever let the meaning of this precious day become normal or allow the reality of what we are talking about somehow get lost in the festivities of this weekend.
- We are talking here about Jesus, the Son of God, after being wrongly convicted, taking a beating that rightly belonged to you & me, having been nailed to the Cross, and experiencing complete and total death by Him giving of His life, on that 3rd day, He took His life back again.
- On that 3rd day, Jesus rose victorious over death, Hell, and the grave and forever claimed victory over the grave. If we can't get excited about that, something is wrong, AMEN?
 - *"Easter is the truth that turns a church from a museum into a ministry."* – Warren Wiersbe
- The most fundamental truth of the entire Bible is that Jesus rose from the dead. Why is this so important? Without the resurrection, the rest of the Bible becomes pretty much meaningless. In fact, when we read about the history of the early church in the book of Acts, we discover that the resurrected Christ was the topic they were to proclaim throughout the world.
 - Acts 10:39-43 – "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."
- The message that Peter preached so many years ago, is the same message we need to preach today & I intend to preach this morning.

I. What Do We Need To Know About Easter?

- There are three specific things you need to know, whether you are already a Christian, or if you're thinking about becoming one.
 - a. **Jesus Died For You**
 - i. When Jesus died on the Cross, He went through that horrible death voluntarily. Jesus chose to die that way, and He made that choice because He knew that one day you would be sitting here lost in your sins in need of a Savior.
 - 1. I Peter 2:24 – "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."
 - ii. Jesus, being the sinless Son of God, took every sin that you and I would ever commit upon His own shoulders, and took the punishment for those sins that you and I deserved.
 - 1. You and I have both sinned and that sin has separated us from a God who has never sinned.
 - 2. Now this holy God, being just, had no choice but to punish us for the sins we committed.

3. But at the same time, this God who never sinned wanted to close the gap and bring us into a relationship with Himself.
4. Then enters Jesus. Jesus then became our substitute on the Cross – the death we deserved for our sin, was placed upon Jesus Christ. We were put on trial for the sins we have committed, and we were found guilty. The punishment for that sin we were found guilty of was death, but even though we were guilty, Jesus took our place.
- iii. When we place our trust in Jesus, we walk out of the eternal courtroom as free men and women without the stain of sin on our record. We have been totally and completely set free from condemnation, and from guilt. Why? Because Jesus died for us.

b. Jesus Rose For You

- i. The Good News about this day we call Easter is that God in human flesh, literally rose from the dead, and proved that He is exactly who He claimed to be.
 1. After Jesus had been crucified, the Bible tells us that the women went to His tomb, and met two angels there:
 - a. Luke 24:5-6 – “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee?”
 2. The angels asked – don’t you remember, this is what Jesus promised?
- ii. I want to remind you of something this morning. Christ Died For You, but He also Rose For You.
 1. His victory over death is proof that everything else He claimed about Himself is true?

c. Jesus Cares For You

- i. With a crowd like this today, I want you to know that I love you & I am excited to have everyone here today, but I can’t possibly know what everyone’s life circumstances are, and I don’t know your individual relationship with God.
- ii. Let me say this. No matter where you are in life today, whether you are a believer in Christ, an atheist, someone who has tried to please God your whole life, or someone who doesn’t really care what God thinks – none of those things change the fact that Jesus cares for you.
- iii. This God in the flesh who died on the Cross and rose from the dead, is the same God who wants you to know right now that there is nothing that you could possibly do or say that would change the fact that He loves you so deeply & so intimately.
- iv. You say, “That all sounds great, but how do you know that. Is there any way to prove His love for me?” I’m glad you asked ... just look to the Cross – isn’t that enough?
 1. John 3:16-17 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
- v. Whether you choose to accept it or not today, God Cares For You.
 1. He loved & cared for those who were helpless,
 2. He cared for those who got caught up in the most vile acts of sin,
 3. He cared for those who had nothing to eat,
 4. Look at His miracles performed for those who were blind, lame, and oppressed by the society in which they lived.
 5. But if that still isn’t enough to prove to you that Jesus Cares For You, what about the promise that He makes to you right now, that if you will only believe, He will

take away every bad thing you have ever thought, every sin you have ever committed, every bit of guilt that has plagued you from your past. He promises that He not only loves and cares for you now, but that He wants to love and care for you for all of eternity.

- vi. Are you ready to accept His care for you today? Simply believe and you will receive everything He has promised.

II. What Is Our Response To Easter?

a. Die To Yourself

- i. Matthew 16:24 – “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”
- ii. Now, to “take up (your) cross” means to die to self – and to die to self means that you are no longer going to be number one.
 - 1. You see, before God can ever be Lord of your life, you must first remove yourself from the throne.
- iii. Many today are so wrapped up in their own lives that they don’t even see their need of Jesus. Maybe you are here this morning & you believe you’ve done OK on your own, “Why do I need Jesus?”
 - 1. Romans 3:10 – “There is none righteous, no, not one.” What that means is found later on in v.23 ...
 - 2. Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” That’s where we all are here today, sinners. And b/c we are all sinners, there is a payment for our sin that must be paid ...
 - 3. Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

b. Surrender To Jesus

- i. Romans 10:9 – “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”
- ii. What this verse means is this ... though we were born a sinner, we don’t have to die just a sinner. But we can die a sinner saved by God’s Amazing Grace.
 - 1. John 14:6 – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - 2. Acts 4:12 – “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
- iii. Folks, Jesus is the only way today.

c. Rise With Jesus

- i. Up until the crucifixion of Christ, death was always looked upon as a very somber & final end to a persons life. But when Jesus died on the cross & rose that 3rd day, all that changed.
- ii. Now for the Christian, there is no longer any fear in death. Why? Because He lives, we too shall live!
 - 1. John 11:25-26 – “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”
- iii. If the Lord tarries His coming, death will come each of our way. But death is not the end, it is just the beginning. We will all live for eternity, either in Heaven or hell, and you choose your own destination today by what you choose to do with Jesus today.

➤ I realize for a lot of people, Easter is just a time of parties, candy, & family time. And for many of us at some point, perhaps that was all we thought about Easter. But there finally came that point in

time when I had to ask myself about the deeper meaning of Easter & why Jesus not only died for me, but He rose for me.

- **I had to not only decide if I truly believed Jesus died for my sins, but also what I would do with this sacrifice. I could either reject God's Greatest Gift, or accept it.**
 - Reject this sacrifice would mean not only living as a sinner for eternity, but dealing with the consequences of that choice as well which would be eternity in a place called Hell.
 - But ... if I accept the blood of Jesus Christ as payment for my sins, then no longer would I be chained to sins of my past, present, or future b/c He paid for them all & now I can have the assurance of a Home in Heaven for eternity instead.
- **In closing, I want to ask you one simple question this morning ... What are you going to do with Jesus this Easter?**