

## The Resurrection of Jesus

### Easter Sunday 4'12'20

**Thesis:** People today are searching for good news. We have good news to declare: Christ is risen. Jesus has defeated death, darkness, disease, and demons.

**Text:** John 19:16 – John 20:18

**Welcome and greetings:** Thank you for joining us as we worship the Lord and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I want to greet those who are joining us live and those will join us on demand later. May the Lord bless you. May you feel and experience the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord grant you grace and peace. And may the Lord use you to be a blessing, in the name of Jesus.

What answer would you get to this question-- if you asked people around the world--  
“What is the most important day of the year for Christians?”

What would most people say?

Most people would say, “Christmas.”

I know what I would say. Growing up, Christmas was the biggest and most important day for me. I loved Christmas growing up: the presents, the food, the presents, the family gathering, the presents.... You get the idea.

Actually, **the most important day for Christians is Easter.** “This is the moment of new creation. This is the day when everything changed. If it hadn't been for Easter, nobody would ever have dreamed of celebrating Christmas. This is the first day of God's new week. The darkness has gone, and the sun is shining” (NT Wright, *John for Everyone, Part 2: Chapters 11-21*).

Yes, I am grateful that the Lord has left a clear witness in our culture. At least twice a year, on Easter and at Christmas, people in our culture are interested in going to church. They are waiting for an invitation.

Ok, there is a third time of the year when people think about going to church; it is called Mother's Day. That is not so much an invitation as a strong suggestion or instruction: “Let's do this. You want to do this for me, right?” Right, moms? It's like a Jedi mind trick.

These are the three largest days for church attendance in our nation: Easter, Christmas, and Mother's Day.

Today, we gather together online to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. This is probably the largest gathering in the history of the church, as people join online services from around the world in the midst of coronavirus to celebrate that Jesus is risen.

**We know that people today are searching for good news.**

According to one source, [Google searches for "good news" are at an all-time high](#). It turns out that people are searching for the phrase "good news" more than at any time since Google began publishing its trends in 2004.

Today, I have good news. Christ is Risen.

- Surely, we have good news, even in the mist of dealing with coronavirus.
- Jesus has conquered death, disease, darkness, and demons.
- Jesus has done what no one thought possible; his is the first resurrection with a new body and the first fruits from the dead.
- Jesus is vindicated by his resurrection to rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. No one is like you, O Lord, no one.
- And because he lives, I live now and for eternity.
- Because he lives, I am an overcomer in Christ.
- Because he lives, I am now a part of the new creation work of restoring and renewing all things.
- Because he lives, I will never, never be the same.
- Because he lives, this world will never, never be the same.

We need good news today because of what we are facing in dealing with the unknown and uncertainties of life and pandemic. And, the Scripture points us to meditate on what Jesus endured and overcame for us as a source of physical and emotional strength, especially when times are hard.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV).*

I believe in the public reading of Scripture. It is important to let the Word of God speak for itself. Then, I want to share some thoughts with you about the resurrection of Jesus.

Let's read about the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus from John's Gospel, from John 19:16-42 -- 20:1-23.

Application:

1. **The Lord knows how you are feeling right now and meets you where you are.**
  - a. **Some of us are grieving.**
    - i. **Grief.** We're feeling a number of different griefs. We feel the world has changed, and it has. We know this is temporary, but it doesn't feel that way. We realize things can change permanently, like going to the airport changed forever after 9/11: the loss of normalcy; the fear of economic toll; the loss of connection. And, we are grieving collectively. We are not used to this kind of collective grief in the air.
    - ii. **Anticipatory grief.** There is also anticipatory grief. Anticipatory grief is that feeling we get about what the future holds when we're uncertain. Usually it centers on death. We feel it when someone gets a dire diagnosis or when we have the normal thought that we'll lose a parent someday. Anticipatory grief is also more broadly imagined futures. There is a storm coming. There's something bad out there. With a virus, this kind of grief is so confusing for people. Our primitive mind knows something bad is happening, but you can't see it. This breaks our sense of safety. We're feeling that loss of safety. When have we ever lost our general sense of safety like this? Individually or as smaller groups, people have felt this. But all together, this is new. We are grieving on a micro and a macro level.
    - iii. **Understanding** the stages of grief is a start. But remember that the stages of grief aren't linear and may not happen in this order.
      1. There's denial, which we say a lot of early on: This virus won't affect us.
      2. There's anger: You're making me stay home and taking away my activities.
      3. There's bargaining: Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?
      4. There's sadness: I don't know when this will end.
      5. And finally there's acceptance. This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed.
    - iv. **Acceptance:** coming to the place of acceptance is transformational.
      1. We find something that we can do in our current reality.
      2. I can wash my hands. I can keep a safe distance. I can learn how to work virtually. I will adjust. I will make it.

- v. **Meaning:** God gives us meaning in the midst of our grief and loss.
  - 1. *I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. 20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. 21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: 22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." 25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD (Lamentations 3:19-26 NIV).*
  - 2. Romans 8:28-29.
- b. **Some of us are fearful.** We are adding tomorrows "what ifs" to today's concerns.
  - i. **Listen to what Jesus said. Don't add to this day the what ifs of tomorrow.**
    - 1. *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:31-34 NIV).*
  - ii. **The antidote for fear is the presence of the Lord.**
    - 1. *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9 NIV).*
    - 2. *But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. 3 For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.... 4 [You] are precious and honored in my sight, and... I love you... (Isaiah 43:1-4 NIV).*
  - iii. Grace for dealing with anxiety and fear comes when **we cast all our anxiety on him because he cares for us** (1 Peter 5:7 NIV).
- c. **Some of us are disillusioned.** The things we trusted in are being shaken or have collapsed, things like our jobs, the economy, our health, or whatever.
  - i. *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the*

mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. 5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. 7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress (Psalm 46:1-7 NIV).

- ii. In the midst of everything that can be shaken being shaken, the Lord wants us to lay hold of his kingdom, that which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:26-29).
  - d. The Lord knows how you are feeling right now and meets you where you are, whether you are grieving, fearful, or disillusioned.
2. **In times of uncertainty, people are searching for good news.**
- a. **Humans are always searching for saviors.** False gospels abound.
    - i. Some people place their hope in the good news of economic stability.
    - ii. Other people place their hope in the good news of health.
    - iii. For others, perhaps they find their joy in the good news of friends and family.
    - iv. These are all good things, but none is the good news in which to place our ultimate hope.
  - b. **The empty nature of these false gospels is revealed in times of uncertainty.**
    - i. Simply put, in a moment of crisis like this, economic stability and physical health are outed as the illusions they are.
    - ii. Right now we find ourselves in a moment where God is orchestrating the affairs of humanity in such a way as to reveal those narratives to be false.
  - c. **People are literally searching for "good news" now that the illusion of control is gone.** In fact, they're typing that phrase into that search bar more than any other time in the last 15 years.
  - d. **Today, I bring you good news.**
    - i. *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14-15 NIV).*
    - ii. *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7 NIV).*
    - iii. *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10 NIV).*
    - iv. *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer*

any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "**I am making everything new!**" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true" (Revelation 21:1-5 NIV).

- e. **And, you can personally experience good news today in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- i. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12 NIV).
  - ii. You can pray right now and receive the gift of life which God offers to you through Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10).
  - iii. You can choose to say "yes" to Jesus, to follow Jesus, and to partner with Lord on his mission in the earth to proclaim and demonstrate what it is like when God rules and reigns through the lives of men and women (Matthew 4:19; Luke 9:23-25; Luke 9:1-2; Revelation 5:9-10).