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## Easter Changes Everything

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- Easter video: Today I want us to re-think Easter. WHY? Because Easter is an event in history that changed everything? What do I mean?

**Intro:** Have you ever had an event that “changed everything”? Maybe it changed your circumstances / changed your thinking / changed your relationships? Maybe it was positive or negative; but it changed you...forever! (Marriage / children / I’ve had painful events...

- I want to share with you about another event that took place 2000 years ago that changed everything. It was the Resurrection of Jesus. I want to look at this story through the experiences of one man. His name is Peter. Easter changed everything for Peter. If Easter can change everything for him, then I believe Easter can still change everything for us as well.

Today we’re looking at Peter’s life before resurrection and after the resurrection (Luke 22 – Acts 2)

Peter was one of Jesus’ closest friends. Spent 3 years together / Last Supper / denial predicted / Jesus’ arrest / Peter’s complete failure / Guilt / Acts 2 - 50 days later - Peter speaks to 1000s in Jerusalem about the reality of Christ. What happened? Resurrection! Jesus had a private meeting with Peter. Jesus appeared to Peter before the other disciples. Peter needed to understand what the resurrection accomplished for him. This changed Peter forever.

- God wants us to know that the same power that changed Peter’s life can change our lives as well. Easter can still change everything! HOW? 3 areas of your life where Easter changes everything!

### I. Easter Repairs Our Relationship With God Through Forgiveness

#### A. Easter repaired Peter’s relationship with Jesus

1. The cross and the resurrection is all about relationship. This is why Jesus had a private meeting with Peter. There was a relationship that needed to be restored. He must have thought his friendships was irreparably broken. I’m sure Peter thought He was the last person Jesus wanted to see. The truth is He was one of the first.
2. Jesus needed to explain to Peter about forgiveness. Peter didn’t need to feel that what he did was unforgiveable. The cross was all about providing forgiveness and restoring relationship.

*II Cor. 5:18* “And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ...” (NLT) Jesus’ purpose was to go to the cross and rise again to provide relationship.  
HOW?

*Eph. 1:7* “He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.”(NLT) The resurrection proves that forgiveness is real!

3. Would Peter have ever felt forgiven if Jesus never raised from the dead? Of course not! He would have lived with that betrayal the rest of His life. I can only imagine what Jesus told Peter. “Peter, it’s OK...I forgive you” “It doesn’t matter how bad your failure was. My victory is greater than your betrayal”
4. This forgiveness changed everything for Peter. He was never the same man after this!

#### B. Easter can repair your relationship with God

*I Peter 3:18* “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God...” (NIV) God’s greatest desire for you is to repair the relationship.

1. You may feel like Peter. You may think you are the last person on earth Jesus wants to see or hear from. You may think that you have gone too far / done too much / and it’s too late to change. This is simply not true.
  2. I know people that I have invited to church over the years who have said things like, “If I came to your church, the walls would fall in on me.” “God would probably send a lightning bolt down on me.” (I’m too bad for God!)
  3. This is so far from the truth! Jesus came to provide a forgiveness that is so complete anyone can be forgiven. Nobody can go beyond the reaches of His forgiveness.
  4. Before any relationship can be repaired there has to be forgiveness. Jesus wants you to know you can have this today. It’s not too late / you haven’t gone too far / and He longs to hear from you.
- You see, there’s something else He wants to set you free from.

## II. Easter Removes The Guilt From Our Past

### A. Easter removed Peter’s guilt

1. In Peter’s mind, his failure was unforgiveable. Therefore, his guilt must have been enormous. Here he follows Jesus for 3 years only to be a complete wash out when Jesus needed him the most. (He denied he even knew Jesus 3 times!)
2. I’m sure he imagined the guilt of his failure he was going to have to live with for the rest of his life. How do I know he had guilt? The Bible says he left and “wept bitterly” after his denial. That’s the result of guilt. The pain of remorse.
  - Have you ever been impacted by your actions like this? Have you ever been crushed by the weight of your own guilt? Guilt is a horrible thing to live with. In fact it is one of the most destructive of all human emotions.
3. The problem with guilt is that it’s a tough thing to get rid of. It sticks to us. We can try to medicate it / ignore with busyness / or just deny that it exists. No matter what we do, it’s still there.
4. Jesus completely removed Peter’s guilt. He was not just forgiven, he was healed

emotionally.

5. How do I know Peter's guilt was removed? Because the Peter we read about after Jesus' resurrection is not a guy weighed down by the burden of guilt. This guy is free. This guy is liberated. This guy is empowered. (Acts 2 – explain)

#### B. Easter can remove our guilt

*Heb. 10:22 "Let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean..." (NLT)* Our guilt can be removed.

1. Our failure's are not just forgiven, Jesus goes even deeper and removes our guilt! Your mistakes don't have to keep you weighed down with regret for the rest of your life. Until guilt is removed, we stay emotionally and spiritually stuck. WHY?
2. Guilt makes people do strange things. We already talked about how people medicate it or deny it, but guilt can cause us to try to punish ourselves as well.
3. As a youth pastor years ago I remember talking to several girls about their destructive lifestyle they were living. I asked them if any of their behaviors bothered them. They assured me "NO". Yet, they were cutting themselves with razor blades.
4. Guilt can cause us to do self-destructive behaviors / can cause us to think we don't deserve any happiness / can cause us to lose all hope / avoid healthy relationships.
5. Easter removes our guilt because Jesus took our punishment on the cross. He was punished in our place. He paid the price that our wrong behavior deserved.

*Col. 2:14 "He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross." (NLT)*

6. All the charges against us were paid for on the cross. Jesus was beat up for us so we can stop beating up ourselves. (This is what guilt is all about)

*Is. 53:5-6 He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed... We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him." (Message)* Jesus took our place.

7. Some of you are weighed down by your guilt today. Jesus wants you to know you don't have to leave with it. You may have carried it in with you, but you can leave it here. He can set you free from it, just like Peter.
  - If you let Him do this...

### III. Ester Resurrects Our Broken Lives To Something New

#### A. Easter gave Peter a brand new life

1. The pre-resurrection Peter and the post-resurrection Peter are two different people. The Peter before the resurrection was fearful / weak / guilt ridden / paranoid / broken individual. The Peter after the resurrection is confident / powerful / unashamed / purposeful. It's hard to believe it's the same guy! The resurrection gave him a new life.
2. Easter allows us to start over. Easter can give us a new lease on life.

*II Cor. 5:17 “This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a **new person**. The old life is gone; a **new life** has begun!” (NLT)*

*Rom. 6:4 “...And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live **new lives**.” (NLT)*

*Col. 2:12 “...And with him you were raised to **new life** because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.” (NLT)*

3. Peter trusted in this mighty power and received a brand new life in the process. You see, Easter is not a religious event or ritual. Easter is all about life change / starting over / It's about giving Jesus the dead, broken pieces of our lives and allowing Him to resurrect us to something new.

#### B. Easter can give us a brand new life

1. What's dead and broken in your life? Can you humble yourself and admit your brokenness? It's only in admitting our brokenness do we get a new life. Do you have a broken marriage / other relationships / broken self-esteem / broken hopes and dreams / weighed down by your past mistakes /
2. Here's what so great about Easter. Whatever broken part of your life you give to Jesus, He resurrects. He makes new / He gives new birth to.
3. Now, I realize all this sounds too good to be true. Listen to the words from the guy who embraced all this. Listen to Peter years later as He wrote this...

*I Peter 1:3 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us **new birth** into a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (NIV)*

- Easter gives us a “new birth” into a “living hope” through our relationship with Jesus. Peter experienced this first hand. So can you! You can have a new life with a living, ongoing / continual hope that will never disappoint you.
- So that you can see that what I am talking about is real, we are going to do something to illustrate the fact that Easter Changes Everything...Jesus Changes Everything. You're going to see a handful of people who have given Jesus their broken pieces, and now they have new life! They've been changed!
- Song: Worship team
- Cardboard Testimonies
- Invitation / Prayer time