

How To Experience Resurrection Easter 2017

Intro: Most people have some basic understanding that Easter is more than simply the Easter bunny, chocolate eggs, Easter egg hunting and peeps. (Although all this is fun – explain) Easter has something to do with Jesus and a tomb. It has something to do with the story of Jesus rising from the dead. But how does this story have any impact on my everyday life? Why should I even care about this? That’s a fair question. Let me answer it briefly and then I want to give you a longer explanation that we all can relate to.

- Jesus left His tomb so we can leave ours. Jesus overcame death, so death will not overwhelm you. Jesus has resurrection power so you can experience resurrection yourself. Jesus walking out of the grave 2000 years ago allows you to leave your grave today.
- Maybe you’re in need of resurrection this morning? You need resurrection in your emotions / your marriage / from your past / from your addictions / from the deadness and darkness you feel inside. Maybe love has died / hope has died / you’re in some kind of spiritual – emotional- relational – even behavioral grave.
- There’s good news! Easter is not just a story about Jesus’ resurrection. Easter can be a story about yours!

John 11:25 “Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live even after dying.” (NLT) It doesn’t matter what you think has died in your life. Jesus wants you to experience resurrection.

- HOW? Let me share with you a story from Jesus’ life and then we will make some application to our own lives.

Summarize John 11 – The resurrection of Lazarus

- Let me share with you three profound truths from this story that relate to our lives.

1. Sin buries everyone

What do I mean by this? All sinful behavior / attitudes / thoughts / motives – all create negative consequences in our lives. Sin can never give life it can only take life. Sin only results in death consequences. Sin buries everyone.

Rom. 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death...(NLT) The end result of sin will always be death in some form. Emotional / relational / spiritual / and eventually physical. Sin cannot give us life.

Rom. 3:23 “For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.” (NLT)

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- The entire human race is effected by the same disease. No one is immune from this. When God tells us this in His word, He is not trying to condemn us for this. Instead, it is more like a Doctor's diagnosis of the disease that is killing us.
- I realize that some churches use this issue of sin to beat people up and make them feel guilty, but this is not what God does nor is this why Jesus came. If this has been your experience with church, I am truly sorry. (Some of you have experienced a lot of pain from a church context – explain)
- It used to be my experience with church. I used to understand God this way. God was always angry with my sin. I could never be good enough for Him. Years later I came to understand that God is more like a Dr. In fact, the Bible even calls Him the Great Physician.
- What kind of a Doctor gets made at the person who has cancer / or any other life threatening disease? Talking about sin is not about feeling guilty. It is about getting the accurate diagnosis so you can embrace the cure. It's about finally knowing what is killing you...what is destroying the good things in your life.
- According to the word of God, sin effects everything. Sin even negatively impacts the environment God created. God didn't create a world where natural disasters and disease ravage the planet. It's all a result of sin. The disease of sin has infected everything.
- Even Lazarus...He was sick and eventually died. This is a result of sin. It wasn't punishment for sin. It was the result of living in a sinful environment. This is why bad things happen to good people in this world. God does not remove the effects of sin from the world we live in.
- We are negatively impacted by sin in 3 ways – our own sin - the sinful choices of others – and a broken environment. God does not put us in a protective bubble.
- This is a hard, broken world to live in. Sickness, death, disease, and brokenness is everywhere. Because of this, sin makes us all feel buried in a variety of ways.

How so?

- Many people live in self-imposed graves...grave of guilt / shame / regret / failures / disappointments / loss / addictions - You are physically alive, but feel internally dead.
- Sin does this to everyone. Our sin / other people's sin / the brokenness of this life and world all negatively impact us. Sin buries our hope / joy / steals our peace. Sin puts everyone in a tomb of some kind.
- Because we can't seem to get out of these conditions...these tombs, we lose hope just like the people in the story about Lazarus.
- BUT, the good news about Easter is Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

2. Jesus is angry over what sin has done to you

Let's revisit the story about Lazarus.

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John 11:33 “When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.” (NLT)

John 11:38 “Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.”³⁹ “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them.” (NLT)

Jesus shows up at the scene of all this pain and He gets angry? Doesn't that seem a bit strange?

- What was Jesus angry about? (It certainly wasn't Mary and Martha) Many people believe He was. Many people believe Jesus was angry over their lack of faith. Really? Their brother is dead!
- I am convinced Jesus was angry over what sin had done. Sin killed His friend – sin damaged the people He loves – sin took life – He was angry over the wages of sin. He was angry over the brokenness. This is why Jesus invaded humanity to begin with!
- In that moment, maybe Jesus was thinking about the ultimate showdown with sin and death that was soon to come with the cross. BUT today, sin and death was not going to have the final say.

Why is this so important?

- Jesus is not angry with you today. He is angry at what sin has done to you. Remember Rom. 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. All sin will ever do is destroy your life / relationships / hope and your future / steal your God given destiny.
- Without Jesus, we're no different than Lazarus. We live in the tombs of guilt / shame / regret / fear / despair / loneliness. We are buried beneath the weight of these issues. This is where some of you live today.
- So many people avoid God because they are convinced He is angry with them for all the sin and brokenness in their lives. The truth is; He is angry, but not at you. He's angry over what sin has done to you. He has more for your life than this.
- Some of you might even be uncomfortable being here today because you feel like God isn't very happy with you for being at a church. The truth is that He is thrilled you're here. See, the walls and ceiling didn't fall in!
- Some of you have been in church all your life and you live in the darkness believing God is angry or disappointed with you every day. It's true God is angry but not at you. He is angry how the brokenness of life has robbed you of the joy of your relationship with Him.
- The entire reason Jesus came was to give life back to humanity that sin has stolen from us.

John 10:10 “The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.” (NLT) Jesus is angry that you have been robbed and held prisoner by sin. This is not your destiny!

*Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that **captives** will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set **free**.” (NLT)*

How can this happen? How can we experience this kind of freedom?

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3. Jesus calls everyone by name to leave their tomb

Let's revisit the story again.

- By the time Jesus showed up Lazarus had been dead 4 days. Lazarus was already decomposing. This was no resuscitation. This was transformation. Why did Jesus purposely wait so long? So there would be no doubt that He is the resurrection and the life. Nothing has more power than He does to change death to life. Not even a decomposing body. (Lord, there will be a stench.)
- Why is this so important? It's never too late for you. You haven't gone too far; you haven't passed the point of no return; your destiny is not sealed. "I have a pretty dark past." It's not darker than Lazarus! If you think you're worse off than Lazarus being dead for 4 days, you're in denial. (You're still breathing!)

What can we do?

- You can't leave your tomb through your own effort. WHY? Dead people can't do anything. Dead people have no power to effect change. They're dead. You leave the tomb through relationship when you finally hear Jesus calling your name! You simply respond to His voice when you hear. That's it! This is all Lazarus did.
- Resurrection is not about what you can do. It's about what only Jesus can do. Jesus is not asking you to do one religious thing. You can't earn resurrection. You can't earn new life. WHY NOT? Because dead people can't earn anything.

Eph. 2:4-5 "But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead." (NLT)

- Jesus rising from the dead means that we can rise out of whatever prison or grave we find ourselves in. HOW?

By simply hearing Jesus calling your name. He is calling you to come out into His light and experience a brand new glorious day. He calls us into the freedom of relationship. He's not asking you to do anything. Just hear His voice today and walk out. Just say YES to Him. Embrace Jesus as the answer to the deadness in your life. Accept Him as YOUR resurrection and YOUR life.

- Jesus has a new day waiting for you.

*Gal. 3:22 "But the Scriptures declare that we are all **prisoners** of sin, so we receive God's promise of **freedom** only by believing in Jesus Christ." (NLT) Resurrection!*

- Our worship team is going to return and share a song with you about this issue. We are putting the words up on the screen so you can reflect and listen to Jesus this morning. It's a song about leaving our tombs. And if you're ready, it's time to walk out of that grave.

(Worship Time Song: Glorious Day)

- Return to the floor and have a prayer time.

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