

Messages of Easter hope from area churches

From Death to Life, Hatred to Love

He is risen, He is risen indeed. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter—the last and first days of Jesus Christ, celebrated by Christians throughout the world for the last 2,000 years. A journey born of jealousy, hatred and death that culminates in resurrection, life and love.

The Bible tells this story in several different ways. Some readings give us glimpses of what's to come and some, like the book of Mark, give vivid details of those last days.

Let's imagine, for a moment, what that might have looked like: Envision a dusty, dirty area outside the city of Jerusalem. Imagine being with a group of your friends who described having heard Jewish leaders talking about a man they say claimed to be King of the Jews. How absurd, you say... that can't be true.

Imagine going with your friends into the streets, being pushed and shoved and actually moved by the force of the crowds who are mocking, spitting and jeering at a man. A man clothed in a purple robe. A man so close you can almost touch his garment, and then that man looks at you from under his crown of thorns and you freeze. You realize you are staring into the eyes of the Son of God. The eyes of love and forgiveness and light. The eyes of the Great I Am. Just imagine. Yes, just imagine.

Rev. Adam Hamilton suggests in his book, *24 Hours that Changed the World*, that "It is this picture, this shamefully cruel and inhumane sport at the expense of a tormented man, that we need to fix on; for it is here that we get a clear and tragic glimpse of what humanity did when God took on flesh and walked among us, Jesus could have destroyed them all with a word."

But he didn't. Jesus chose instead to go to the cross knowing that the power of God's love would overcome his death through resurrection.

As Christians, we share the power of that resurrection. The God of love, who raised Jesus to new life, works in and through us so that we, as followers of Jesus, can joyfully continue his work in the world.

Join us Sunday at 10:30 a.m. as we celebrate a journey into the resurrected life with music, readings and a message of hope and love.

Heppner United Methodist Church is located at 175 West Church Street in Heppner.

Patty Nance, Pastor; Cara Osmin, Pastor
Heppner United Methodist Church

Holy Week & Easter services in your community

Area churches extend an open invitation to whoever would like to participate in the week's services:

Easter Sunrise Service

Easter morning, April 5, 7 a.m. community sunrise service at Les Payne Field in Heppner.

Christian Life Center

Easter, April 5, 10:30 a.m. morning worship

Heppner United Methodist Church

Easter, April 5, 10:30 a.m. morning worship

See the Shared Ministry schedule for other Holy Week services.

Valby Lutheran Church
Easter, April 5, 10 a.m. morning worship.

Shared Ministry of Hope Lutheran and All Saints Episcopal

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7 p.m. at Hope

Good Friday, April 3, 7 p.m. at All Saints

Easter, April 5, 10 a.m. Sunday festival worship with communion at Hope.

Church of the Nazarene

Easter, April 5, 10:30 a.m. morning worship

St. Patrick's Catholic Church

Wednesday, April 1, 7 p.m.

Through the Crucifixion to the Resurrection

If you're reading this on Wednesday or Thursday, you're not too late! There's still time this week to experience the resurrection story in all its fullness by remembering what came first: a death. And not just any death...the unjust and brutal death of God's own son.

The joy of Easter Sunday is hollow without the tragedy of Good Friday. So, if you can, attend a Friday service that looks this death in the face and recognizes that we are the ones with hearts as hard as nails—hard enough to nail an innocent man to a murderous cross.

And if you can't get to church, find a Bible and read two chapters from the Gospel of John: 18 and 19. Then, when Sunday dawns, you can turn to John 20 and hear what is just the beginning of the rest of God's story: that Jesus rose out of death to life.

This great mystery changes our story—past, present and future. Our past sins are erased from God's memory. Our present is freed from the fear of death and the burden of our past; freed to experience God's unconditional love now. And our future in God's presence is certain for all who call on the name of the Lord.

But it takes a death to know this kind of life. It takes an encounter with the Crucified One to meet the Risen One in all his glory.

Rev. Katy Anderson
Hope Lutheran and All Saints Episcopal churches

The Beauty of Humanity

Ofentimes when people talk to me about the tasks of ministry they say that they think it would be the most fun to do weddings. I do enjoy doing weddings. There is lots of joy and love to go around. But something I am always a little hesitant to admit is that I cherish doing funerals. Not because I am morbid or twisted, but because people are different when they come to funerals. There is a sense of vulnerability and raw love that is present at most funerals and memorials that just isn't there for most other moments of life. You see who people really are when they are grieving and, what I would say after witnessing these moments for several years is, 99.9 percent of humanity is really amazingly beautiful.

As we head toward our Easter celebrations this week, it strikes me how amazing it is that God sees this beauty in us too. The story of the end of Christ's earthly life is so horrific, portraying the worst of humanity. And yet, instead of God just ditching us after we had the audacity to kill his beloved son, God continues to be with us, returning once again, this time in the form of the risen Christ, to make sure we really got the message that God's love is unconditional.

As we have our Easter celebrations on Sunday, may we remember the beauty of humanity. May we remember that God sees the beauty in us, and invites us to see it in one another, as well.

Happy Easter!
Pastor Stacy Shelton
Ione Community Church

Holy Mass and Glorious Adoration

Holy Thursday, April 2, 7 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Supper, Eucharistic Adoration

Good Friday, April 3, Stations of the Cross at noon, 7 p.m. Passion of the Lord

Holy Saturday, April 4, 7 p.m. Easter Vigil Mass

Easter, April 5, 11 a.m. Easter

ter Holy Mass

St. William's Catholic Church

Good Friday, April 3, 5 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Easter, April 5, 8:45 a.m. Easter Holy Mass

Ione Community Church

Easter, April 5, 9:30 a.m. brunch followed by Easter worship service at 11 a.m.

The Greatest Statement Ever Spoken

In John 11:25-26 Jesus said, "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."

Norman Vincent Peale has said, "This is the greatest statement ever made by God or man." It is not great because of its eloquence; nor because of the lofty concepts embraced; nor because it presents great moral and philosophic contributions to humanity. It is a great statement because the person making it assured its truthful reality.

Any person having been raised from the dead prior to Christ experienced only a resuscitation. They went on to live a normal physical life and die a normal death. No one had ever experienced a real resurrection of the kind described in I Corinthians 15, one where the body "is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

Jesus rose victorious over the grave with the keys of hades and of death (Rev. 1:18). It was not for his own benefit he conquered hades and death, but for us he did it (Isa. 53:12). "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on immortality and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." "Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:50-57).

Aren't you glad you're a Christian? Jesus gave us victory over death and hades! No wonder the scripture says concerning the Christian's death, "We sorrow not as others which have no hope" (I Thess. 4:13). Let us celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, for in it we have the assurance of our own resurrection and eternal life.

Pastor David Jenkins
Christian Life Center

The Death & Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The resurrection of Jesus is important for several reasons.

First, it witnesses to the immense power of God Himself. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in God. If God exists, and if He created the universe and has power over it, He has power to raise the dead. If He does not have such power, He is not a God worthy of our faith and worship. Only He who created life can resurrect it after death, only He can reverse the hideousness that is death itself, and only He can remove the sting that is death and the victory that is the grave's (I Cor. 15:54-55). In resurrecting Jesus from the grave, God reminds us of His absolute sovereignty over life and death.

Second, the resurrection of Jesus is a testimony to the resurrection of human beings, which is a basic tenet of the Christian faith. Unlike all other religions, Christianity alone possesses a founder who transcends death and who promises that His followers will do the same. All other religions were founded by men and prophets whose end was the grave. As Christians, we take comfort in the fact that our God became man, died for our sins, and was resurrected the third day. The grave could not hold Him. He lives, and He sits today at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

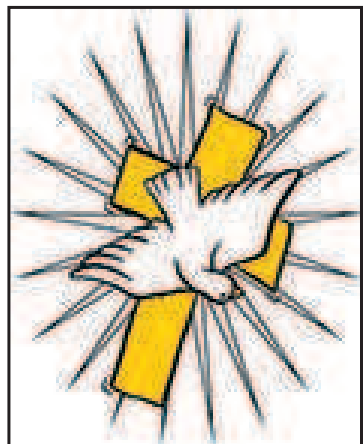
In I Cor. 15, Paul explains in detail the importance of the resurrection of Christ. Some in Corinth did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in this chapter Paul gives six disastrous consequences if there were no resurrection: 1) preaching Christ would be senseless (v. 14); 2) faith in Christ would be useless (v. 14); 3) all the witnesses and preachers of the resurrection would be liars (v. 15); 4) no one would be redeemed from sin (v. 17); 5) all former believers would have perished (v.18); and 6) Christians would be the most pitiable people on the earth (v. 19). But Christ indeed has risen from the dead and "has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (v. 20), assuring that we will follow Him in resurrection.

The inspired Word of God guarantees the believer's resurrection at the coming of Jesus Christ for His Body (the Church) at the Rapture. Such hope and assurance results in a great song of triumph as Paul writes in I Cor. 15:55, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

The resurrection is the triumphant and glorious victory for every believer. Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose the third day according to the Scripture. And, He is coming again! The dead in Christ will be raised up, and those who remain and are alive at His coming will be changed and receive new, glorified bodies (1 Thes. 4:13-18). Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important to salvation? It demonstrated that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. It proves that God has the power to raise us from the dead. It guarantees that those who believe in Christ will not remain dead, but will be resurrected unto eternal life. That is our blessed hope!

So, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us live in the joy of Easter with all our friends in Christ and make our special efforts to reach out to those who don't know about Christ, so they may know Jesus and manifest their joy outwardly as we are doing today. We shall live in faith in Jesus Christ that He is truly risen from the dead and bring joy to the whole world. The Lord is Risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Wishing you a Blessed and Joyful Easter.
Rev. Fr. Papa Rao Pasala
St. Patrick's and St. William's Catholic churches



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