



## The Death and 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 (1 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 1 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 1 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

# Messages of Easter hope from local pastors

## Everybody loves a parade

## Discovering God

Yes, I do believe that everybody does love a parade. It was so evident just a week and a half ago when hundreds of happy folk turned out for our St. Patrick's Day parade. Smiles, cheers, laughter, interesting people dressed up for a great time. Parades are like that. Parades are the times when we bring before a gathered crowd the things that we are most proud of. Time to show off and maybe brag a bit. On St. Pat's Day it was a time to let others know that we enjoy our life here in Heppner, Oregon.

Holy Week, which the Christian Churches are observing this week, is something like a parade. In fact Palm Sunday (Mar. 25<sup>th</sup>) remembers a special parade in which Jesus the Christ was welcomed into his own nations' capitol city, Jerusalem.

Happy crowds lined the street to see him pass by. Nobody could see the terrible cross on a nearby hill that would soon point to his death. And nobody could even imagine that this Jesus would follow his death by rising again from the dead in just a few days.

resurrected unto eternal life. That is our blessed hope.

So, Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us live in 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

Holy Week, for Christians, becomes a parade that goes from joy, to sorrow, to celebration, as we walk through these eight days from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. The lighted cross on the hill high above Heppner is our reminder that Holy Week really did happen once. And Holy Week today continues to be an invitation, for all of us, to seek out a church of our choice and to learn more about what the resurrection of Jesus means for you and me. Walk the walk, join the parade and discover the true Jesus.

This coming Sunday, Apr. 1, the local ministerial association invites you to come to the football field bleachers at the fairgrounds at 7 a.m. as we begin the celebration of Easter Day with a Sunrise Resurrection Worship time. Then folks move to the several churches of the area to continue the Easter celebration. The Heppner United Methodist Church has its worship at 10:30 a.m., and of course you are most welcome to join with us as the parade continues.

Pastor Keith Brudevold Heppner United Methodist Church

## A story with no end

How it happened exactly, we don't know. Jesus had been tortured and killed and hastily stashed in a borrowed tomb on Friday evening. By Sunday morning, that tomb was empty. Many had witnessed the crucifixion, but there were no human witnesses to the moment of resurrection. The first evidence, entirely circumstantial, was an empty tomb where there should have been a dead body. Jesus' story could have ended there.

But it didn't. Jesus rose. Death couldn't hold him. Because that tomb was empty, the friends of Jesus could stop cowering in fear for their own lives and become spirit-filled witnesses who couldn't stop talking about what they had seen with their own eyes: a living Jesus, now scarred by his execution. Jesus' story had

I like to explore and discover new places, things and food. It is amazing to taste new foods for the first time or to see new places and things that I have never seen before. Unfortunately when we discover the food of another culture or view a new landscape we are often just scratching the surface and not experiencing all there is for us to discover.

Consider the ocean as one stands on the shore, whether it be a sandy beach or a rocky point and you look out at the expanse of the ocean do you know all there is to know about the ocean? No, we only see the surface and know nothing of what lies under the splendor of the blue sea and rolling waves. But the things we discover when we begin to look below the surface.

Below the surface we find a multitude of sea life from sharks to giant whales. Lobster, shrimp, crabs and clams. Fish of many colors, sea weed which waves to the motion of the sea, coral reefs and depths so deep that no light can penetrate. You see when we stand on the shore and look at the ocean we see and know

very little about what is really there. In fact, some people spend their entire lives exploring and discovering what the ocean holds.

The same can be said about mankind's understanding of God. In many ways we know very little about the one who created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them (Genesis 1). I would contend that we can spend our entire life studying and exploring God and at the end of our life we would feel like we are standing on the shore looking at the ocean not knowing what lays under the surface.

However, we do not need to know everything there is to know about God to be right with Him. In reality we need to know a couple of things: 1. God loves you (John 3:16), 2. He sent His Son to pay the price for our sin, death so we can have eternal life by putting our faith in the work of the cross. See, not an exhaustive list of the attributes of God nor everything there is to know about Him, but enough to begin the journey exploring Him and His love for you.

Heppner Christian Church invites you to come and discover God with us this Easter Sunday. I can assure you it is a journey that has benefits beyond what you can see and will last for eternity. We will gather at 10:45am and would love to have you come and worship with us.

HAPPY EASTER.  
Ray DeLoe  
Heppner Christian Church

failures and all the mistakes of our past. We've been freed from the illusion that we can save ourselves and win God's love by being good enough. We've been given the gift of new life in Christ, an eternity in God's presence and an abundant life now.

That tomb is still empty. Jesus still lives. And so can we.

Rev. Katy Anderson  
Hopeful Saints Ministry  
Hope Lutheran & All Saints Episcopal

not come to an end after all, it was only beginning, as one generation after another heard the news and believed what they heard, that new life had emerged out of death—first for Jesus, but not only for Jesus.

His life means new life for all who believe in him. As friends of a living Jesus, we're not confined to the dark tomb of human reason and limited vision. Our identity isn't defined just by family ties or occupation, or the ups and downs of our personal story, or the turmoil rampant in our homeland. When the light of Christ shines into our dark places, we are made new. Even events that feel like endings can be recognized as new beginnings, filled with new life and hope, because Jesus has set us free. We've been freed from the burden of our

## Forsaken by God

Have you ever felt abandoned? Have you ever felt like everyone around you had abandoned you? Do you ever feel lonely? Do you ever feel empty, isolated, rejected, or forgotten? If so, you are in good company. Jesus endured rejection as well.

It is bad enough to be abandoned by a friend, family member, love interest or spouse, but it is something entirely different to be abandoned by God. This is the abandonment Jesus endured for our sake on the cross when he cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34)

Jesus' personal abandonment by his dad gives him a human quality we can relate to as he shares the sorrow of rejection with us in this terrible moment. It makes him approachable, relatable and brings out hu-

man attributes and elements of suffering we can all identify with. Who has not experienced the heartbreak of loneliness?

We suffer rejection from those we love. Everyone knows the taste of that bitter cup and the repulsive burn running down our throats into the pit of our stomach. It hurts. It reddens our eyes as we try and hold back those salty tears that blossom and fall uncontrollably down our cheeks cutting visible trails and channels of pain.

You can identify with that. You can feel that. Now, imagine that suffering on a cosmic level. Imagine if God, the maker of all things, told you that he didn't want to be around you anymore. Imagine if he said that he could not look at you anymore. Imagine if he said that he was going to punish you for every wrong

ever done.

That is the suffering, abandonment and rejection Christ faced on the cross. Why would God do such a thing? What kind of a dad would do that to his son? There is a reason.

Someone has to pay for wrong doing. Justice demands, and goodness require wrongs be righted. Jesus said, "I'll right the wrongs. I'll take the penalty and punishment for wrong doing. Pour Tripp's punishment out on me. The punishment that Tripp deserves for all the wrong Tripp's ever done and will ever do...pour it out on me instead of on Tripp."

Take my name out and put your name in that blank. Jesus was abandoned by God so that you and I would not have to be forsaken by God. He stood in my place, and he has stood in your place.

Knowing that makes all our loneliness bearable. We can endure suffering, because we know that it is temporary. We know that because of what Jesus did on the cross, God will not abandon us, not because we deserve his love, but because Jesus has been abandoned by God for us. Have you ever thought about God in his way? Tripp Finch  
Willow Creek Baptist Church  
560 Minor St, Heppner

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