



Messages of Easter hope from local pastors

Resurrection of Jesus hard to believe

Do you find the resurrection of Jesus hard to believe? You're not alone. No one believed it at first. Everyone doubted. The first reaction to the discovery of an empty tomb was fear and confusion, not faith. But that changed. The followers of Jesus met the risen Lord in person. He spoke with them. He ate with them. The experience of a living Jesus changed them.

But that happened a very long time ago. Can it happen still? Can it happen even at a time when things religious are often met with skepticism and some Christians have developed a reputation for hypocrisy, narrow-mindedness and little ability to consistently live like Jesus? What could possibly motivate any thinking person in the 21st Century to take a leap of faith and seek a relationship with the still-living Jesus?

Maybe this: In a world where brutal warfare has returned and robbed so many people of peace and security, home and family, the teachings of Jesus and his death and resurrection show us just how far God was willing to go to set us free from fear and sin and hopelessness. We are forgiven and loved by God in spite of everything, and we've been promised that the day will come when God's kingdom of peace and justice will prevail

Living Without Regret

Do you find yourself living with regret? Perhaps you regret not even getting close to your New Year's resolution. (Bet you forgot about that until just now. You're welcome. Yet something else to feel regretful over.) Perhaps you regret having spent the last two years of your life in a Covid/war-torn world. Perhaps you regret something very serious, a transgression of some kind that haunts you daily. Perhaps your regret is less serious, but still troubling. We all have regrets.

As troublesome as regrets are, I want to reveal something to you that can change the way you see regret. There was an event 2,000 years ago that was so powerful it was capable to abolishing all of our regrets for all eternity. That event was Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Jesus died. Many people saw it happen. He was publicly executed by the Roman government in the 1st century AD. However, he didn't stay dead. Three days after dying he came back to life. Remarkable I know. Maybe even unbelievable. How could this happen? And even if it did, why should we care other than just being mildly fascinated by a historical detail long before we were born?

This thing, this story of Jesus' death and resurrection, if you believe it, has the power to completely change your life. Turn your life upside down even. Because if this is true, this means that Jesus was really who he said he was, namely, the divine Son of God. This means that he (by the act

over every trace of human greed, lawlessness, and destruction, and every tear wiped away.

That future hope can even become a present reality, one person at a time. Despite the distance in time between the resurrection and this present moment, it's still possible to experience the living Jesus now, through scripture, prayer, worship, service and a community of believers who are unafraid to share their stories about what God has been up to in their lives. Sometimes all of those access points can even be found in one place: a church, where faith and doubt, honesty and hypocrisy, trust and fear often share a pew. That gathering of saints and sinners could be just the right place to meet Jesus and experience firsthand God's gifts of unconditional love and forgiveness, offered to all, even in the midst of this messy world.

So don't let this Easter season slip away with nothing more than chocolate bunnies and colored eggs. Take a risk. Spend time with the living Jesus, crucified and risen. Who knows; it might change you too.

*Rev. Katy Anderson
Hopeful Saints Ministry
A Lutheran-Episcopal partnership*

of actually rising from the dead) really was God in the flesh and that when he said, he died for your sin, he actually died for your sin. This means that you, through Jesus, if you believe this, can actually have a relationship with God and be completely restored to God (be in harmony and unity with the God who created all things). It means that when you die, you will be with God forever and ever in a place of perfect peace and that you have always longed for but could never find.

Jesus will restore you for eternity, and Jesus has restored you today, right now, starting this minute if you turn from worry and regret and turn towards him. That means that all of your regrets, no matter how grievous, have been taken care of by Jesus and that one day you will remember these no more. This means that no matter how badly you have messed up, one day because of Jesus you will be made completely whole again. And don't forget this...he is in the process of making you whole right now, if you let him.

This is good news. And this good news is all based on Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Do you believe Jesus rose from the dead? Do you believe that he is capable of restoring you? If so, don't forget it. Remind yourself of it right now. If not, why not let today be the day when you believe it and receive it. Regret no more, be restored.

*Tripp Finch
Willow Creek Baptist Church*

Humbled and Exalted

Alas, according to the law of gravity, what goes up must inevitably come down. That is a law which governs the way things work on this planet. It is an undeniable and unavoidable reality. There are many such laws of physics and life pertaining to the physical realm of our existence. Likewise, there are spiritual laws which relate to all of us. There are undeniable spiritual laws, axioms if you will, which govern the affairs of men in relationship to God.

One of those is a principle often cited in the Bible: "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:7-11, 18:9-14; Matthew 23:6-12). Those who lift themselves up in pride, will be humbled by God. Those who humble themselves before God, shall be exalted (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

This validity of this spiritual truism is vividly demonstrated in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:5-11 speaks to the humility and exaltation of Christ. To what extent did Jesus humble himself? To the maximum extent possible. In descending from the heights of heaven, then humbling himself to the point of death on a cross, he humbled himself beyond that of any person in the history of men. "He humbled Himself" (Philippians 2:8). He was not humbled by others. He deliberately chose that path. He "super-humbled" Himself.

So, on the other side of this spiritual axiom, we have the expected result. "He who humbles Himself shall be exalted." So, what if someone decided to super-humble themselves in a transcendent and preeminent manner? What would we expect in that case? Well, it is exactly as we suppose—according to this spiritual law—that person would be "super-exalted" to a place of preeminent honor. This is exactly what we read about in the history of Jesus. He was born into

this world. He lived among men as a servant. He humbled Himself to the point of death. He died on a cross for our sins. He rose from the dead. And in his first sermon, the Apostle Peter declared: "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God..." (Acts 2:32-33).

Charles Spurgeon once commented on this, "He stooped, who can tell how low? He was raised, who shall tell how high?" Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him. He threw away his name; he emptied himself of his reputation. How high is his reputation now? How glorious is the name that God hath given him as the reward of his redemptive work? And He now stands in this super-exalted position, exercising authority over all and preparing His church for His return. God has given to Him the Highest Place, the Highest Name and the Highest Reign. The One who died for sins in humility, is now exalted to the right hand of God in glory. And He's coming again and will reign over all. The day is coming when every knee will bow to Him, and every tongue will confess Him to be Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). He died for our sins and rose from the dead so that He might save us from our sins. Have you trusted in Him for salvation?

The path of humility demonstrated in Jesus, is the path to which He has called the Christian to live (Philippians 2:3-5). The Apostle Peter put it this way: "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He might exalt you at the proper time" (1 Peter 5:5-6). In other words, live like Jesus. Humbly serve Jesus by serving others. In due time you will receive your reward.

*Jerry Conklin
Hospice Chaplain*

What is Love?

The answer may seem obvious – God demonstrated love for us through Jesus Christ - Who lived, died and was resurrected for us. What might not be as obvious is how this love has power today to transform every aspect of our lives.

The resurrection changed everything.

At the cross, Jesus died in our place for our sins; Jesus entered into our pain and our shame; Jesus came and took on the weight of Evil itself—so that its power could be broken, and because Jesus didn't stay in the grave, we see that His death and resurrection is God's love freeing us from sin... God's love overcoming death... God's love announcing that one day a new creation will come.

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, we see the love of God. When we look at Jesus, we can say, "This is love."

Sin is not a popular word and sin can be a confusing word. Sin is the sense of missing the mark or failing to be who God created us to be. Sin is falling short of our first calling to be God's image-bearers who reflect God's wisdom and love and rule into the world. Sin is also a rebellion, a turning away from God, a decision to move against God or independent of God. Sin is a transgression, a crossing of lines and boundaries, a violation of another person, and ultimately sin is a power. It is Sin with a capital "S" that holds us captive and paralyzes us with shame.

Take all of this together and realize that sin is a dead end. It's a grand "Game Over." So, what do we do about that? We can accept and receive what God has done for us through Jesus

Christ. Through the resurrection sins can be forgiven.

Think of it: Our sins—our missing the mark, our falling short, our transgressing and crossing of lines—are forgiven because Jesus died and rose again and the power of Sin that holds us captive, that paralyzed us, that holds us in the same patterns of failure, is now broken.

To be forgiven is to be free. Free from guilt, free from shame, free from the power that enslaves us, and free to be fully human. To be what God made us to be. To reflect God's image, God's wisdom, God's love into the world.

Our lives can be transformed right now. Maybe you've thought it was "Game Over," that you've hit a dead end because of a mistake you've made, or a destructive habit you're caught in... I've got good news for you: It's not over. Just as it wasn't over when Jesus died on the cross and was buried, it's not over for any of us. Because Jesus carried our sins upon Himself on the cross—because God raised Jesus from the dead in victory over sin and death—it is not over. Sin is not the end. The resurrection changed everything.

You're invited to join us for a special three-week series starting Easter Sunday- This is Love will help us discover just how deep God's love is and how powerful it is to transform us from the inside out. We'll begin Easter Sunday with a breakfast at 9:30 a.m. Worship starts at 11 a.m.

All are welcome, so bring a friend.

Blessings to you and yours.

*Pastor Jeff Clabaugh
Ione Community Church*

Disregard your own well being

Not many of you may know this about me, but I am deathly allergic to spiders, which makes me terrified of them. I am sure I will regret sharing this information to the community of Heppner because it often puts me at the butt of many jokes. I share this with you all today because there was one moment when my children were little, that I didn't think of my fear or my self-preservation from these creepy, crawly, eight-legged creatures with their terrifying pinchers and instead, I saw that my daughter had a giant spider in her hair, that she was completely unaware of. My love and care for her safety led me to disregard my own well-being. I snatched the spider up as quickly as I could and smashed it within my fingers, knowing full well, that the smallest bite could have sent me to the hospital.

In a similar, but much grander way, our Lord and Savior did the same thing for each and every one of us. We had the lurking danger of sin hanging over each of our heads. We were unable to overcome it on our own accord. We were doomed to suffer the consequences of death because of our sin.

However, our loving and gracious Savior, Jesus


Christ, stepped off of His Holy thrown in order to take on flesh and dwell upon us. With the sole purpose to disregard His own well-being, to suffer on the cruel cross, all so that three days later, He could rise from the grave, completely victorious. He put the danger of sin to rest for all those who put His faith in Him. With this imagery in mind, it makes 1 Corinthians 15:54b-57 much more encouraging and uplifting. "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

During your Easter Celebration, take the time to praise Jesus for His great mercy and love because without His great sacrifice, death would still have its sting. Without His great sacrifice, death would still have the victory. Without His great sacrifice, we would have no hope. Celebrate the truth that Jesus is alive today and because of that, we now have freedom, hope and life.

*Pastor Quentin Byers
of Heppner Christian Church*

Save The Date!

Jerry Martin's
90th Birthday Party



May 28th
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