

“I Give Up...Death”

John 20:1-10

Easter

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Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm Harbor, Florida

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mG3rsr9WQ4w>

Jesus Christ is alive! I said...Jesus Christ is alive!!!! Woo-hoo!!!! Easter has turned my life around. After our first grandchild, Bailey was born; I was talking to my son Ben and asking how he was doing. He talked about the difference it was now that he had his first child. The preparation to go anywhere. The fact that he had responsibility for another living person He said, “Dad, having a child is a game changer!”

Well, friends, Easter, new life, is not just a game changer...but a life changer. This day changed everything. Jesus Christ crucified, dead and now alive. He’s alive again.

A little boy and his father were driving down a country road on a beautiful spring afternoon. Suddenly out of nowhere a bumblebee flew in the car window. Since the little boy was deathly allergic to bee stings he became petrified. His father quickly reached out, grabbed the bee, squeezed it in his hand, and then released it. But as soon as he let it go, the young son became frantic once again as it buzzed by the little boy.

The father sensed his son’s terror. Once again he reached out his hand, but this time he pointed to this hand. There, stuck in his skin was the stinger of the bee. “You see this?” he asked. “You don’t need to be afraid anymore. I’ve taken the sting for you.”

The Christian does not need to be afraid of death because Christ has taken the sting out of death and sin.

**1 Corinthians 15:55-57 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**<sup>55</sup> O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”<sup>56</sup> For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. <sup>57</sup> But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus gave up death and IS alive, so that we too can give up death. We are to live.

A man and his five-year old son were driving past a cemetery and noticed a large pile of dirt next to a freshly dug grave when the little boy said, “Look, Dad, one got out!”

Friends, let me tell you about one who really got out. The tomb was rolled away and he is alive.

**Ephesians 5:14 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**<sup>14</sup> “Awake, O sleeper, Arise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”**

J.D. Walt, Vice-President of Seedbed at Asbury Theological Seminary says, “Real Christianity means awakening to the mysterious reality of being raised from the dead before one actually dies. It is impossible. It is incredulous. It is inconceivable. It is . . . real.”

Don't be dead! Be alive! Give up death---today!

This is exciting stuff. The first day of the week Mary Magdalene sees the stone/rock rolled away--and you thought I was going to say something about this is where “Rock and Roll” started...but no instead I'm going to talk about Disco. This is where the Bee Gees got the song “Staying Alive!”

Feel the city breakin'  
 And ev'rybody shakin'  
 And we're stayin' alive, stayin' alive.  
 Ah, ha, ha, ha,  
 Stayin' alive.  
 Stayin' alive.  
 Ah, ha, ha, ha,  
 Stayin' alive.”

Yes, Jesus did die and now He's staying alive!!!

Mary Magdalene runs to Simon Peter and to John and tells them what she saw---actually she tells them what she DIDN'T see!!!! Now Peter and the other disciple, John are running. They are excited. John the younger of the two outruns Peter and gets to the tomb first, but doesn't go in. He waits for the old man Peter to get there. Peter goes into the tomb and sees... no body!!!

The disciples then go back to their home. I wonder what message they are going to tell. They didn't fully realize what was going on..but we do. Here's the message as we talked about with the children:

**(emoji with heart eyes and smile)** Easter is about Jesus coming to pay for our sins because He loves us so.

**(emoji with tear)** Jesus had to die on the day we now call Good Friday to pay for all the times we sin and disobey God.

**(emoji with bandage)** After Jesus died He was in the tomb for 3 days before something amazing happened.

“He's alive and I'm forgiven, Heavens gates are open wide...He's alive!”

Boys and girls...”What happened?” That's right He's alive.

**(thumb's up emoji and clapping emoji)**

By the way, next week we begin a sermon series of 3 sermons entitled **(image)** “Emoji's of the faith.”

What a week Jesus has been through. Just a week ago He entered Jerusalem and they were shouting “Hosanna.” On Thursday, known as Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday with the realization that one of His disciples will betray Him. Oh, how have we betrayed Him? He said He was giving His life, His blood for us. He prayed, “Not my will, but thine be done.” On Friday, called Good Friday because it was very good that He took all our sins away, He died on the cross for you and me. And then today..The tomb is empty and He’s alive.

This week I was driving and I saw a lady in a car next to me, just singing as loud as she could, hands off the steering wheel (risky I know) snapping her fingers, and her head bopping around and she had a smile on her face. I said to myself, “Self” that’s Easter!!!! I like that.

Friends we should be excited---we need to be excited. Just as Jesus gave up death for life---we can too!!! We ask Jesus to be our Savior and he lives inside of us in that wonderful relationship we can have with Him.

**2 Corinthians 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!**

**Romans 6:11New Living Translation (NLT)**

**<sup>11</sup>So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.**

New life. Old gone. Dead to sin and alive through Jesus Christ!!!!

I am wearing one of the wrist bands that were in the Children’s worship bag. It says, “I live for Him!” It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me!!!! Give up death and live. Experience the resurrection of heart, mind, and soul. Jesus in you!!!!

Do you know Him?

The following story about Dr. Paul Tillich is most likely urban myth. Snopes does not verify it. But it brings home a point.

At the University of Chicago Divinity School each year they had a special day where they would bring a guest lecturer in to speak. On this day each one is to bring a sack lunch to be eaten outdoors in a grassy picnic area.

One year they invited Dr. Paul Tillich. Dr. Tillich spoke for two and one-half hours proving that the resurrection of Jesus was false. He quoted scholar after scholar and book after book. He concluded that since there was no such thing as the historical resurrection the religious tradition of the church was groundless, emotional mumbo-jumbo, because it was based on a relationship with a risen Jesus, who, in fact, never rose from the dead in any literal sense. He then asked if there were any questions.

After about 30 seconds, an elderly preacher stood up in the back of the auditorium.

"Docta Tillich, I got one question," he said as all eyes turned toward him. He reached into his sack lunch and pulled out an apple and began eating it. "Docta Tillich ..." CRUNCH, MUNCH ...

"My question is a simple question, "CRUNCH, CUNCH ..."Now I ain't never read them books you read ... "CRUNCH, MUNCH ... "and I can't recite the Scriptures in the original Greek ... " CRUNCH, MUNCH ... "I don't know nothin' about Niebuhr and Heidegger ... "CRUNCH, MUNCH . He finished the apple. "All I wanna know is: This apple I just ate-was it bitter or sweet?"

Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and answered in exemplary scholarly fashion: "I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven't tasted your apple."

The white-haired preacher dropped the core of his apple into his crumpled paper bag, looked up at Dr. Tillich and said calmly, "Neither have you tasted my Jesus."

The 1,000 plus in attendance could not contain themselves. The auditorium erupted with applause and cheers. Dr. Tillich thanked his audience and promptly left the platform.

### **Psalm 34:8 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**<sup>8</sup> Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!**

Do you know Him? Have you tasted Him? When you taste something it is in you? Is He in you? I'm going to stop right now and ask you to pray with me. (Prayer)

Vance Christie writes this about William Sangster. "Sangster (1900-1960) was a prominent evangelical Methodist minister in Britain. From 1939 to 1955 he pastored Westminster Central Hall, a prestigious Methodist church not far from Westminster Abbey in London. During World War 2 the basement of Sangster's church was used as an air raid shelter. For 1,688 nights Sangster ministered to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of all types of people who gathered there for safety. After the war he spearheaded a spiritual renewal movement in Methodist churches across the country.

In 1958, however, Sangster was diagnosed as having an incurable disease that caused progressive muscular atrophy. When he learned of the diagnosis, he made four resolutions: "I will never complain. I will keep the home bright. I will count my blessings. I will try to turn it to gain." Later he wrote: "There have been great gains already from my sickness. I live in the present. I am grateful for little things. I have more time – and use it – for prayer."

Over the course of two and a half years he experienced the gradual paralysis of his muscles, which left him with no voice and able to move only two fingers. With them he communicated with others by writing, but eventually even that became illegible.

On Easter morning, just a few weeks before his death, he managed to write: "How terrible to wake up on Easter and have no voice to shout, 'He is risen!' Far worse, to have a voice and not want to shout. (Shouting "Christ Is Risen!" – William Sangster, by Vance Christie )

Oh I want to shout it!!!! How about you.

Mary ran to tell Peter. Peter and John ran to the tomb. Today I want to shout and run.

Run to see Jesus. I want to shout.

He is good!

He is love!

He is light!

He is hope!

He is peace!

He is true!

He is joy!

He is life!

Jesus, Jesus. Jesus Christ is alive!!!

The resurrection of Jesus changed the world. A game changer. A life changer. After He died on the cross for our sins, God raised Him from the dead. This is the testimony of hundreds of millions of Christians.

Jesus Christ is alive!!!