

RESURRECTION SUNDAY IS OVER, NOW WHAT?



Devotionals
16 – 22 April
2023

"The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: "He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him." Now I have told you.'" Matthew 28:5-7 (NIV)

Another Easter has come and gone. The day is without a doubt the most important day of the year for Christians. Much time is spent in preparation for the day. You probably attended church and spent time reflecting on the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Your day most likely involved time with your family and friends.

How can we stop allowing lesser things to push the blood of Christ to the periphery of our lives?

The sad truth is, now that Easter is over, most Christians will not think about the resurrection for another year. This is much like Christmas, which also only gets our attention once a year; however, it should never be this way. The truth of the resurrection of Christ is something that should impact the life of a believer every day.

Easter Sunday has come and gone. Followers of Jesus all over the world have marked the most significant day in history, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection was God's exclamation point to the ministry of Jesus; the "Temple" had been destroyed and raised up three days later. But what about Monday? Is the singing and shouting over? Jesus encountered the disciples on Easter Sunday, but what about after Easter: what about Monday, or Tuesday, or beyond?

The Apostle Paul explains it like this in Romans 6:4, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." The resurrection of Jesus made it possible for people to live a brand new life by the power of the Holy Spirit. We could call this "newness of life" made available to us the "resurrection life."

We are a forgetful people.

Monday is perhaps the most forgetful day of the week. We live much of our lives with this escapist drive toward the weekend, thinking those two days will fulfill all of our needs and dreams. More sleep. More time to work on those assignments. A chance to have clean clothes again. Time with people I like. Time with God.

Then Monday rolls around. "How was your weekend?" people will ask. Does your mind go blank?

We prepare our hearts in anticipation of Easter. We reflect on the cross and its significance. We feel the long, heavy pause between Good Friday and Easter Sunday — waiting for the discovery of an empty grave and a risen Savior. And then it comes. He comes!

And then it's Monday.

The temptation is to treat Easter like it's an ending. The eggs have all been found, Jesus is risen, we went to church, and now it's back to "normal life." But nothing is normal after Jesus.

Easter was a revolution. It was the day after which nothing will ever be the same again. When a man who claims to be God rises from the dead, "business as usual" isn't a thing.

Easter isn't just a time to pause and reflect on some nice truths we tend to forget about the rest of the year. It is the entire crux of our faith. It is the only reason we have to hope.

If there was ever a time for significant life changes, it should be the Monday after Easter. Because Easter is a beginning, not an ending. It's THE beginning, the fresh start all of our hearts long for. It isn't about fluffy bunnies and pastel colors — it's about the radical death, relentless love and revolutionary power of our God.

The cross, the empty grave and the resurrected Jesus not only give us a reason to hope for change, they give us **the power to change**. Rather than us trying to change from our own efforts, **the resurrection changes us**.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV), "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he/she is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

We come to the Monday after Easter a changed people because Jesus' resurrection gave us a new identity. Our identity is not in the choices we make or what I/we accomplish, but in who Christ's resurrection has made each of us to be.

It was the first day of the week. The disciples had locked themselves away out of fear. Everything Jesus had taught, everything He had said or done; it all seemed like a distant memory now. We see these disciples again in Acts 4, preaching to the Jewish leaders they had been hiding from. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13, ESV).

Something happened in that locked room that radically transformed them from fearful, anxious men into witnesses that would not be silenced, would not be ashamed, would not stop sharing what Jesus had done — even at the cost of their own lives.

The resurrection was everything for them now. The cross had been the death of everything they had hoped or believed was true. But it wasn't the final end. It was only the end of who they had been, and it was the beginning of who they truly were meant to be. When Jesus came back to life, they came alive.

WELCOME TO THE WEEK AFTER EASTER. What does this have to do with the Resurrection Sunday? After Jesus was resurrected, there was a transition or a shift. Now, our interaction with Jesus is through the Spirit. This is the way that He continues the power of His Incarnation. We are not to continue holding Him as if He was still on the same mission as before He died. We see this in the story of Mary at the tomb. She wanted to touch her Savior, as all His disciples had done in His life. But He says, "Touch me not." We see in the Resurrection ministry of Jesus an intentional transitioning to a different phase of witness: a resurrection witness based on the Sacraments. The witness of God is no longer based on touching Jesus in His earthly life, since it was part of the plan that He ascend

into heaven. We have a witness that clings by Faith to His presence through the Spirit in the Body of Christ, the Church.

We no longer have a witness that relies on seeing the Dove that descended on Jesus in His baptism, but we trust a witness that sees by Faith that same Spirit who regenerates every new believer in the sacrament of Baptism. The resurrection witness is no longer based on hearing Jesus preach on the green hills of Galilee. The resurrection witness hears the words of Jesus, by Faith, in the preaching and ordained ministry of the Church, and the Scriptures written by the Apostles, both by the power of the Spirit. We are now living in this resurrection witness that John speaks of, and Jesus has continued the power of the Incarnation in the ministry and sacraments of the Church.

A life forever impacted by the events of Easter (a resurrection life) will have some unique distinctions about it.

- **IT WILL BE MARKED BY LOVE.** Love is the defining mark of a resurrected life. It was love that sent Jesus to the cross, and it was love that brought Him back to life again. God is love, and when His Spirit fills a person's heart, love takes up residence. John states this very simply in I John 4:20, "If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar."
- **IT WILL BE MARKED BY JOY.** Joy is the primary emotion of God. It describes God's perpetual emotional state. The resurrected life takes on this quality as a normal, everyday condition. Jesus told His followers in John 15:11 that they would be filled with His joy. "I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow." We will certainly have days and times when we feel down or discouraged; however, as we continually seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to be led by The Spirit in all of our ways, joy will return.
- **IT WILL BE MARKED BY SERVICE.** Service to others is the expression of love. The greatest service that God provided to humans was the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is what we needed most. Jesus expressed it like this, "...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 28:20) A resurrected life is focused on the needs of others because that is what the Spirit of God is focused on. The Apostle Paul explains the Holy Spirit's desire in Philippians 2:4, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

There are many marks of a life impacted by the events of Easter. The resurrected life is a life of trust, courage, and victory over sin. It is a life free from anxiety, fear, anger, and lust, and it is a life of peace and deep faith.

The resurrection should be on our minds all the time—everyday—because this one event in history is the event that made it possible for all people to experience life the way God intended. To the glory of God. Amen.

Talking to Our Heavenly Father - *If we have faith, our prayers will be answered.*

You're Not Alone, Let Us Pray with You & For You

PRAYER & CONCERNS

- A Service in Witness to the Resurrection, Remembering **Ms. Barbara Lovensheimer**, will be held on Saturday, April 22, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m. at Living Hope Presbyterian Church, W156N4881 Pilgrim Road, Menomonee Falls, WI 53089. Cards and notes of support and comfort can be mailed to Ms. Barb's significant friend, Mr. Jerry Loebe, Dickson Hollow, W156N4881 Pilgrim Road, #350, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051.
- Merciful God, as we mourn the loss of your faithful servant; husband, father, grandfather great-grandfather, and friend, **Mr. Richard "Dick" Simmons**, we ask you to cover his devoted family and friends with your wings of love and compassion. We know God that you love them so much and that you will take care of all their needs. Lord, fill the gap that has been left in their hearts and give them the courage to face each day without Mr. Dick. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Cards and messages of love and support can be mailed to Mrs. Shirley Simmons & Family, 2908 Valley Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095.

- **Bro. Bob Krell**, is rooted in our hearts as we shower him and the Family with our love, care and support. He is grateful and humbled for your prayers and cards of restoration, strength and miraculous healing. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering our prayer. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.
- **Mr. Len McGinnis, Jr.**, continues to quietly face medical challenges with valor, hope and courage. Comfort his pain, calm his fears, and surround Mr. Len with Your peace. Your cards and notes of healing prayers and support for Mr. Len and Mrs. Shelia McGinnis can be mailed to: 1230 Vogt Drive, West Bend, WI 53095.
- We remain in prayer and support to **Ms. Ann Cording** after her recent surgery. Ms. Ann will undergo further medical treatment. Visit Ms. Ann, dear Lord and grant her strength to bear this sickness with which she is afflicted, with patience, submission to Your will and trust in Your loving care. We humbly pray that You will bless the means used for Ms. Ann's recovery and those persons who will administer them. Cards and notes of love and care can be mailed to: Mrs. Ann Cording, 1416 S. Silverbrook Drive, West Bend WI 53095
- **Mr. Brett Barnett** is recovering from hip surgery. We give God thanks and praise and pray that God will bless our brother with God's loving care, renew his strength, and heal what ails him in Jesus loving name. Cards and notes can be mailed to: Mr. Brett and Ms. Mary Barnett, 932 Hillcrest Street, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **We still need YOU! We need leaders and volunteers to serve in various positions on committees and boards. You may not think you have the gift, talent, and/or time to serve, but all are called to work in the kingdom. We need you!**
- Our **church family members and friends** are experiencing all forms of challenges and concerns. "Lord, give me the courage to face the challenges and ills that come. Help me to persevere and not give up. Give me the strength to face these storms. Pour out your peace over me and keep me in your perfect peace. Amen.
- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** having been diagnosed with Epilepsy, is still working with her medical team to find the correct medications and doses to control the seizures. She is very grateful for your love, prayers and support. Special prayers for Mr. Pat as he cares for Ms. Sandy. Cards and notes can be sent to: Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Ms. Nancy Whitson** is still admitted at The Pavilion at Glacier Valley. She requests your prayers and support as she continues to journey with health concerns. Please send cards and notes of encouragement to: Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We're keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.

Prayer: O God of the Last Supper. God of the Cross. And God of the Empty Tomb. We come before you now and we pause. We inhale the scent of snow-white Easter lilies. We see the rain as it falls in veils and sheets of April showers. And we listen. Holy Week has passed. But how we long to live by the marvelous story we have heard. Let us remain ever beside you at the table of the Last Supper. Show us who is hungry. And give us the courage to offer them bread from your table. Show us who is thirsty. And give us the strength to lift up the cup of your love. Most of all, show us how to linger at the table, serving others— doing **ALL** that we do in remembrance of You, and the way You were when You walked this earth. We lift these simple, limited words up to you, O God. Amen

**With passionate hope, love and the promise of your Resurrection,
your humble Pastor-servant leaders,**

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin