

Jesus Saves – Eph 2:1-10 (Easter 2016)

It's a great day to worship our resurrected Lord; I'm increasingly thankful for great songs to do so; And I trust that as we get into God's Word . . .

He will use this time to spur you on and change your life

So let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew 28, and get at it; Mt 28:1-10

- Last summer we were in Canada, and decided to go to an amusement park one day
And while I was sitting on a bench at one point, I was struck by the number of people wearing a shirt that *said* something; Like North Face, Reebok, Nike; You name it
And of course there was the occasional family with their name in neon

And that doesn't even touch all the shirts with messages

Like – “No Coffee, No Workee”; Really? Or – “Get a natural high, climb trees”; Wow

And while I'm not *big* on message T's, I wondered – “What would be the most important message I could put on a shirt?”

And I came up with this – Jesus lives, Jesus reigns, Jesus loves, Jesus saves; That's it

I couldn't think of anything more important; Nor any message I'm more passionate

about; And I decided right then and there, that's what I want to tell you this weekend

That . . .

Jesus lives (Mt 28:1-10)

Just like the Bible says; V1

[1] Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week [Sunday], Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. [2] And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. [3] His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. [4] And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

[5] But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. [6] He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. [7] Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”

[8] So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. [9] And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. [10] Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

That's Easter; And the crux of it is that Jesus lives

The prophets predicted it, Jesus foretold it, the angels reported it, and the apostles proclaimed it; Even to the point of death

Over and over they beat the drum of his resurrection

- And I could go into an apologetic as to why we can *trust* their word, which I've done many times – but this time I want to give you *my* word, my testimony
Not that it's *equal* to theirs, but similar

Summarized best by that old hymn, “He Lives”; You know the words?

“He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today; He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way; He lives, he lives, salvation to impart

You ask me how I *know* he lives? He lives within my heart.”

That's the most *compelling* apologetic; The most convincing reason he lives

I *know* him; I have a relationship with him; I walk with him and do life with him

I talk to him, making him the constant companion of my thoughts

I listen to him in prayer and through the reading of his Word; Jesus lives b/c I *know* him

And *feel* him – welling up within me to act or speak; Or comforting me with peace; Or

convicting me of sin; Or leading me in the way of righteousness

Or spurring me on to love and good deeds; Or strengthening me to persevere; Or

reminding me of truth; Or granting me clarity

Or giving me discernment; Or courage; Or faith; He lives b/c I *feel* him

And, I feel *alive*; Which is exactly what the Bible says will happen (**Rom 8:11**)

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. The Spirit of Christ

IOW I know *Jesus* lives, b/c I live; Physically, with a heightened awareness of his presence within; And spiritually, with a greater sensitivity to things unseen*****

- Jesus lives, and I'm living proof; And so are hundreds of others sitting around you
And thousands more beyond these walls; And millions around the world
Not that numbers *alone* prove anything; But numbers with the testimony of Scripture
and the evidence of changed lives – do; They *do* prove something
Namely, that Jesus lives, within our hearts

And he'll live within yours, if you ask him; If you'll turn to him; If you'll give yourself to him just like Ryan and Katie did

That's the first part of the most important T-shirt message I could deliver – Jesus lives

The 2nd, is that . . .

Jesus reigns (Eph 1:20-21)

Toward the end of a very long sentence in Eph 1 (**V20-21**), it says . . .

[God worked his great might] in *Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, [21] far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*

Jesus was raised from the dead, and then raised to heaven, to sit at the right hand of the

Father – the most powerful place of preeminence in all the universe

Far above all other powers it says; Seen *and* unseen; Now and *forever*

IOW he reigns; He's Lord of all

And for good reason; He conquered death; He conquered life, living it perfectly; He conquered Satan; And he'll conquer the *world* one day; He reigns as Lord*****

- But perhaps *most* important and *most* amazing, is that he reigns in the hearts and lives of those who follow him; Right now
Those who trust him, and submit to him, and follow him; Which is no small thing
B/c if we're honest, that cuts against every fiber of our being

We are pre-disposed to rebel; We are pre-conditioned to rule our *own* life
And the more we do, the harder it is to follow

➤ That's why some of you struggle with whether you're really saved; You've never come to the point of confessing Jesus as *Lord*; Not openly; Not completely
You've never acknowledged his rule and reign in your life; Let alone surrendered to it

Others of you have never even *considered* his lordship; You've never even *thought* about stepping off the throne of your life; And you need to
B/c the Bible says that a day is coming when *every* knee will bow and *every* tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:10)
And if you wait until *then*, it's too late; Instead of life and heaven, it's gonna be death and hell; B/c Jesus reigns as Lord of all, and deserves your allegiance *now*

3rd . . .

Jesus loves (Eph 2:1-5a)

Eph 2:1-5; After saying that Jesus reigns, it says in v1 . . .

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked [he's using the past tense b/c he's talking to believers; those who have already received and embraced Jesus as their Lord and Savior], *following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air* [Satan, the devil], *the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—[3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ* [let's stop there]

You were dead it says, but God gave you life; Why? B/c of his great *love*
The love found in Jesus; And poured out on the cross; Where he took the punishment we deserve for our sins, and bore the brunt of God's wrath
That's love (**Eph 5:2**); Just like it says a few chapters later
Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God
Jesus loves; He loves us

Captured best by that familiar children's song; "Jesus loves me this I know . . ."
"Yes, Jesus loves me; Yes, Jesus loves me; Yes, Jesus loves me; The Bible tells me so"
Spot on

➤ But it's not just for kids; It's for you; Jesus loves *you*; No matter who you are, what you've done, or what you're doing – he loves you*****
Young adult, in the grip of pornography – Jesus *loves* you; Not with a pampering love, but a perfecting love; He loves you
Unmarried couple, in the throes of passion and fornication – Jesus loves you; Not to pacify you, but to sanctify you
Alcoholic and drug user, Jesus loves you; Not for you to *stay* that way, but for you to become like him

So often, in the midst of our sin, we think there's no way God can love us; No way; "It ran out a long time ago. Had to." And yet, it didn't; And won't

You could be an angry husband, a bitter wife, a cut-throat businessman, a shameless liar, a secret sinner, a hardened saint, a diehard skeptic, or all the above
Jesus *still* loves you

There's nothing you've done and nothing you're doing, that disqualifies you from his love; There's no sin – past, present, or future – that's beyond his grace
There's no pit beyond his reach; No debauchery beyond his mercy
No height, depth, or breadth of your iniquity, that could ever exceed the height, depth, or breadth of his love; None
It's who he is and what he does; He loves

And b/c of that, he saves . . .

Jesus saves (Eph 2:5b-10)

That's the last part of the message; V5 – B/c of his great love, God *made us alive together with Christ* [and then he inserts this thought]—*by grace you have been saved—*
We don't do it; We don't raise ourselves from the deadness of sin; And we don't do anything to deserve it; We can't; We're dead
It's all God, and it's all grace

God *made us alive together with Christ . . . [6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*
IOW when God saves us, he gives us a privileged place of honor alongside Jesus, full of blessing and glory; It's true now, and will be completed later

[7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing [this saving]; *it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship* [not our own, but his], *created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Salvation is all God, and it's all grace; And Jesus, is the embodiment of it; He *is*, the grace that saves – Titus 2:11
The grace of God has appeared [referring to Jesus], *bringing salvation to all people*
IOW Jesus saves

➤ The question is, from what? What does Jesus save us from?
And the answer, is the consequences of our sin

Your sin does not exceed his love, and your past is not beyond his reach
But short of his salvation, your destiny is hell – an eternity of torment and separation, from which there's no return
The wages of sin is *death* the Bible says, eternal death; *That's* what Jesus saves us from

And apart from *faith* in him, that's where we're headed
We're saved *by grace* it says, *through faith* (8); Faith; Not the *nebulous* kind that's thrown about so cheaply these days; But the biblical kind
Faith in *Jesus*; Belief in *Jesus*; Trust in *Jesus*
It's the conduit through which grace flows, to save us from the consequences of our sins
It's the key to unlock the treasure of his salvation, and give us life

Jesus saves, and faith is the key; Belief is the key (**Summary**)

You may never wear the shirt, but you sure can have the life

Pray – And as we do, keep your message notes and a pen handy

If I’ve been talking to you, and you believe for the first time that Jesus lives and reigns
and loves and saves – I’d love for you to pray with me; Right where you sit
Just call out to the Lord in the quietness of your heart, and say something like this

“Jesus, I believe; I believe that you died in my place, and rose again so I could too
I believe that you reign over all, and love even me; I believe it
So please forgive me of my sins, come into my life, and be my Lord from now on”

➤ If you just prayed with me, one of the best things you can do is tell someone; That’s
what the bottom portion of your notes is for
So would you tear it off, check the box that applies, and drop it in the offering in just a
few minutes?

In fact, I’d love it if everyone would do so; Whether you made a decision today, or 20
years ago – we’d love to know, and pray for you, and encourage you any way we can
Just check the box, gives us your information, and drop it in the offering (ushers)

“Lord, thank you for saving our souls; Thank you for giving us life; And thank you for
Easter that makes it all possible
We give now of our tithes and offerings, b/c of all you’ve given us, in Christ”

You are loved