

## **Easter Slide**

As a child- Arthur had the stereotypical dream of so many little boys...he wanted grow up to be the worlds greatest French Horn player.

At nineteen- he dropped out of college to play professionally in a touring chamber-music ensemble. Over one hundred concerts a year, driving around the country in a huge van. Living on a dream!

Before he was 21 he had seen all 50 states and been to 15 countries and made albums- some of which he heard on the radio. He was well on his way!

But by his early 30s- he had hit his ceiling in his ability to play- no matter how hard he practiced- he wasn't getting better.

So he quit and went back to school.

He got bachelors degree in economics...later went on to earn PhD in public policy and worked as a military operations research analyst for the Air Force.

But he still wasn't happy.

So- in yet another life transition- he accepted a position as a professor at Harvard- under one condition- That he could research the philosophy and science of happiness. The thing that had eluded him for so long.

Since 2019- he has served as a professor at Harvard Business school where he runs the Happiness Laboratory at the Center for Public Leadership.

He now teaches a "Leadership and Happiness" class at Harvard Business School that has become one of the most popular classes at Harvard...It maxes out at 180 students per semester ...and keeps up to 400 students on the waiting list. There is also an Illegal Zoom link where students can watch the class lecture- that Arthur is knows about (and is secretly ok with).

## **Finding the Good Life**

Now- There's 2 reasons I want you to know about Arthur C Brooks.

One- is I want you to know that when I quote him- the man has done a lot more than sit in an office thinking about happiness. He's conducted peer-reviewed research at one of the foremost institutions of learning in the country....and he's lived through the disappointment of his own dreams...what he thought was his only path to true happiness.

The second thing I want you to see- is how hungry the most well-off people in the country STILL are for the secret to happiness.

I mean- if you are a Harvard student- you likely have a lot of advantages moving forward in your life- access to power, money, prestige, respect.

...and yet...students are lined up around the block to try to get a seat in Arthur's class...just to learn about how to find the good life.

For as long as humanity has been around- its kind of amazing that we still have difficulty figuring out how to be happy.

...and we still keep getting lured into the idea that it has to do with getting a lot of money, or power, or control over our own lives or fulfilling our desires as quickly as possible.

We can't seem to learn our lesson.

There is a Tao Buddhist festival that happens in August called the "Hungry Ghost" festival. The idea is that once a year hell is opened up and ghosts rise up to walk the streets.. people place food and drinks and burn paper replicas of money and cars and TVs and houses...hoping that these items will reach the ghosts and help them to have some satisfaction in the after life.

I wonder how many of you feel like a "Hungry Ghost"?

You haven't died yet, but all the satisfaction you can squeeze out of life happens in short bursts of buying new clothes or phones or video games, or going on vacations or changing jobs or distractions like a drink every evening...or scrolling through Instagram reels or autoplaying Youtube videos until you fall asleep or just pass 3 or 4 hours without the terror of sitting in the quiet with your own thoughts.

And you aren't any more satisfied than when you first started..in fact...you are worse off...which makes you hate yourself a little more and so you just want to distract yourself some more from the hell-ish cycle you're in.

You're a Hungry Ghost. You keep consuming...you keep chasing (like those ghosts in Pac Man)- but nothing you take in sticks to your ribs...it just seems to pass right through you.

**"Pursuit of pleasure doesn't lead to happiness. It leads to rehab."- Arthur C. Brooks**

and for a hungry ghost- it leads to re-hell. The same empty dissatisfaction once the dopamine leaves over and over and over.

As I've studied happiness and meaning over the last several years- from philosophy, history, psychology...and of course- theology- I've boiled the good life down to consisting of 3 things.

**Spiritual Connection**  
**Deep Relationships**  
**Transcendent Purpose**

You know what's missing from that-  
Self-satisfaction.  
Personal Achievement.  
Getting everything you want when you want it.  
Having others serve you.  
Being physically attractive.  
Becoming popular online.  
Retiring with enough money to live in leisure.

Whats missing from that list is basically everything most of us chase.

And you know what is behind every single one of those three things- Love.

**TITLE SLIDE "The End of Hungry Ghosts: How Jesus' Resurrection Leads to the Good Life"- Luke 24: 1-12; 36-49**

Today is Easter. The day that Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

....and there are 2 things I want to show you about Jesus' Resurrection today that make it the most important event in history...and the most important thing that can happen for anyone's quest for the good life. My aim over the next several minutes...is to show you what I mean- by showing you what the Bible says about it.

**Luke 24:1-12**

**On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared.**

**2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 They went in but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. 5 So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground.**

**"Why are you looking for the living among the dead? " asked the men. 6 "He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands**

of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day' ? ” 8 And they remembered his words.

9 Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest. 10 Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them were telling the apostles these things. 11 But these words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went away, amazed at what had happened.

#### **Luke 24:36-49**

36 As they were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace to you! ” 37 But they were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost. 38 “Why are you troubled? ” he asked them. “And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” 40 Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat? ” 42 So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence.

44 He told them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you — that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, 47 and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.”

Transition: Ok- here’s the 2 things I want to show you today about the Resurrection.

- 1- It Cosmic.
- 2- Its Personal.

#### **1- The Resurrection is Cosmic.**

You can ask anybody this question “What’s wrong with the world?” and you will almost assuredly get back a quick response.

All of us have some idea that the world should be a certain way...and it’s not.

And today, more than anytime in the history of the world- we can know and remain aware of so much of the injustice and evil and suffering happening all over the world through our phones...which are making us more fearful and collectively anxious than any people in the history of the world- which is in and of itself a giant problem we're facing.

When genocide, slavery, famine, poverty and racism run rampant all over the world. Natural disasters like earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, tsunamis cause unimaginable loss and heartache...it feels...well...overwhelming to look at your phone, or the news outlets. Diseases like cancer and seemingly random accidents like car crashes take people we weren't even thinking about losing from us.

And constantly...constantly we're looking for someone to blame. Governments. other races. other genders. Doctors. manufacturers of faulty products. the devil. God himself.

We have this instinct...that the world is not like it should be. And someone... SOMEBODY needs to pay for their sin against humanity.

We instinctually know that the world should be a place of flourishing for every human being...and instead ....well its pretty unjustly and painfully...not.

There is one thing that's universal. One thing that doesn't care about who you are, where you're from, or what you've done-

### **The Backstreet Boys.**

No- JK- Death.

Death is the ultimate brokenness in the world. It is the absolute end to human flourishing. Death is a curse. The Scripture calls it "the last enemy to be defeated"

### **Personal stories**

Grohl- sudden death.

A week later- another friend's 18 year old son- out of nowhere- had a seizure on his couch and less than 3 hours later was being wheeled into emergency brain surgery.

One of my 4 sons died almost 16 years ago now. And there is a void. A person missing at dinner for 16 years.

One of the primary reasons its so difficult to find happiness is all of us have been affected by the brokenness of the world.

There are 2 things we're looking for- that if knew we could get them from the pain and suffering and death- that we would truly be incredibly happy people.

## **1- Justice.**

If we could know- that whoever caused the pain, the harm, the sin...that they wouldn't get away with it...we could face it.

## **2- Redemption.**

If all the death- the decay- the falling apart of the world- if it could somehow be undone. Or imagine this...what if it could be used. Transformed. What if it could make us stronger...more beautiful...what all the pain could turn to gold in our lives?

In short- what if everything we thought we lost- we could get back.

This is what I mean when I say the resurrection is COSMIC. its all encompassing.

## **Luke 24:36**

Did you see when Jesus showed up to his disciples after his resurrection- The first thing he said to them was "Peace"

Peace means more than just calm. It means wholeness. Everything working together as it should. FLOURISHING!

## **v37-40**

They are all standing there in disbelief. Because nobody... I mean nobody is expecting this to happen. Notice what Jesus does. He shows them he's not a ghost. He has been raised physically! Bodily.

He even says "I'm not a ghost!" while he is showing them his hands and feet.

## **v 41-42**

Then- notice it says they are in disbelief BECAUSE of their joy.

Best way to put this- is that what they were seeing was too good to be true. Its not just that Jesus is resurrected...its that he- in his own body is put back together again. He's not bleeding out and bruised- he is WHOLE!

And then- to prove he's not a ghost- Jesus eats the piece of fish.

I don't know if Jesus is hungry or just wants to show them he has a completely working body... but we know he's not a hungry ghost....and what the Scripture tells us is that because he's not...you don't have to be either.

See- Jesus' resurrection from the dead actually means that justice and redemption will happen.

That those things we are looking for...that we need...his death and resurrection guarantee.

Every evil thing ever done and all the suffering from the brokenness it causes will actually be used for good. We'll get back everything we thought we lost.

Death is undone.

### **Colossians 1:18 (only "He is the firstborn from the dead" & 1 Cor 15:20**

The Apostle Paul calls Jesus the "firstborn from the dead" and "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep or died."

Meaning that when Jesus died- he started something. He undid the curse of death and suffering.

But not only that.

### **Romans 8:19-21**

**For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility — not willingly, but because of him who subjected it — in the hope 21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.**

THE WHOLE WORLD will be made new. A physical creation. NO GHOSTWORLD!

And now we won't- like unsatisfied hungry ghosts- roam around searching for happiness...no...we will be at peace. Flourishing. Complete. Whole.

So what does that do to the suffering now?

### **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

**6 Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. 18 So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

This is the whole idea that even the worst things we experience now...are actually going to make eternity with Jesus that much better

Dr. Tim Keller- pastor of Redeemer Church in NYC- died of cancer a few years ago. And not long before he died, in one of his final interviews...he was asked "What message do you have for the 22 year old person who is looking at the world right and is a little scared about the future? What's one thing they should concentrate on- what would you advise them?"

This is what he said:

**"If Jesus Christ was actually raised from the dead, if he really got up, walked out, was seen by hundreds of people- talked to them. If he was raised from the dead, then you know what? Everything's going to be all right. Whatever you're worried about right now, whatever you're afraid of, everything is actually going to be OK. Because you got to remember, we're not just talking about resurrected people.**

**This is where Christianity is unique, we're talking about a resurrected world. There's plenty of other religions that talk about a future afterlife, which is a nonmaterial world. In other words, you get a consolation for the world we've lost. Christianity says it's not just your bodies that are being resurrected, but the world is actually going to be a material world that's cleansed from all evil and suffering and sin. If Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, then the whole world is going to be, in a sense, resurrected and everything is going to be OK. Everything.**

**[My wife] and I cried a lot last night. Sometimes the reality of the shortness of what we have left here just overwhelms us. And we were just weeping together and crying. And then we say, 'If Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, it is going to be OK.' And then you can wipe your tears, but you don't stop crying. It's like salt in the wound that keeps the wound from going bad. That keeps the wound from getting infected. But until we actually meet Jesus Christ we still have our wounds. So they are going to be healed, but they'll be healed by his wounds.**

**If Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and he was- you're going to be OK."-  
Tim Keller**

That's looking to the unseen. The seen is broken. In the middle of the broken...you have to look to what has been promised by Jesus resurrection...

**All wrongs will be set right. Nothing is lost. Everything is transformed.**

**So the Resurrection is Cosmic- its going to usher in a new physical creation. Just like Jesus' body resurrected...so will the world Jesus made.**

**2) The Resurrection is personal.**

One of the things that Arthur Brooks says is key to finding the good life is living a life of meaning.

You have know the WHY behind your life.

In fact, asking big- difficult or impossible to answer questions like WHY? are huge for living a good life. Something only humans can do. No matter how sophisticated a chimpanzee gets- it simply will never be able to ask the question “Why?”

In other words, You get stuck living the life of a Hungry Ghost when you are never thinking beyond getting up, going to work, buying products, entertaining yourself until your next vacation....then doing that on repeat until you die.

If you are never asking the big questions about life— like Why am I here...and why does that matter- then you are living like a chimpanzee.

It is One of the scariest questions to ask- because it will force you to face what you really believe about life- about yourself- about God- is represented really well in a song that came out last year by Jon Bellion. He wrote it as he was awaiting the birth of his first child.

Its called “Why”.

**I'm scared to meet you 'cause then I might know you  
And If I know you, I might fall in love  
Once I'm in love, then my heart is wide open  
For you to walk in, drop a bomb, blow it up**

**Why love anything at all?  
If the higher I fly, is the further I fall-  
Why love anything at all?  
- Jon Bellion, Why**

The song never answers the question.

Its a song that anticipates that the question will only be answered by year after year actually loving his son as he grows up.

But it represents a deep fear and deeper contradiction that all of us face.

That is- we all want love- but we also know that loving means hurting. It means loss. It means the possibility of rejection. It means that those we love- we know we'll eventually lose.

So is it possible its better not to love at all?

Arthur Brooks in his research says if he had to boil it down...

“Happiness is love.

If you aren’t loving others in the way you make your daily bread.

If you aren’t loving people, and allowing yourself to fall in love..

If you aren’t a child of God, loving God- you aren’t going to be happy.”

**“One thing you need to know about happiness is you need to give your heart away. You need to love and be loved”- Arthur C. Brooks**

In fact, in a culture of fear today- one thing we’re losing is the ability and desire to risk on love.

But have you ever noticed how personal Jesus is not only in his ministry- but as he goes to the cross- and then in after his resurrection?

Of course- Jesus had a father and mother, brothers. He had close personal friends in Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Even in the disciples, he he had 12 men with him everywhere he went...and was closer with 3 of them, Peter, James, and John.

From the cross- he told John to take care of his mother, Mary.

Think about the heartbreak of his mother as she watches him die.

On Good Friday- I watched the crucifixion scene of Jesus from “Passion of the Christ” while I played Jon Bellion’s Why?- just to get some of the feeling that Mary must of had watching her precious boy die.

In Luke 24 the resurrected Jesus meets 2 guys walking down the road and talks with them personally- guys that knew him. But they don’t recognize him until they sit down and have a meal together- something very intimate and familiar.

In another gospel account of the Resurrection- Mary Magdalene doesn’t recognize Jesus until he says her name. Personal.

In John’s gospel, Peter realizes the resurrected Jesus has come to them when Jesus tells him from the shore to put his net out into the water and he hauls in a bunch of fish- what Jesus did the very first time he met Peter.

Then when Peter gets to shore, Jesus sits him down in front of a charcoal fire- the same kind of fire Peter stood in front of when he denied him for the 3rd time before he was crucified. And Jesus asks Peter 3 times “Do you love me?”

One time for each denial.

**Back to 2)**

To be such a cosmic universal thing...the resurrection is deeply personal.

This is something that makes Xianity unique.

Buddhism- and most eastern religions teach that there is not a personal afterlife...but an impersonal one. You are absorbed like a drop into a sea. Person-hood disappears.

And if personhood disappears, so does love.

Because love MUST have individual persons. Love can't exist without personhood.

Xianity is a trinitarian. One God- 3 persons. That means that love has always existed. That even before time- there has always been a God, Father Son and Holy Spirit- mutually loving one another. And out of that love- in an act of gracious overflow- they created.

The big WHY behind you and I is not just some inanimate force that pushed life into being. No.

The big WHY behind our very existence is the personal overflowing love a God who is and always will be love.

Xianity is the only religion in the world in which love is eternal. Everything came from love and is moving toward love.

Let me ask you something.

Is love- is it love if it expires?

Can you tell your child- "I'll love you for now- we'll see about tomorrow,"?

Have you ever heard wedding vows that say "I love you in this moment, but we'll reevaluate after the first year." - even though we live like this- you know we can't say it. Because as soon as you put an expiration date on love...you know its not love.

### **POSSIBLE CUT**

One of two things is true and they are mutually exclusive. You have to decide which way you are going to live.

**Either everything that seems personal- is actually impersonal.**

**Love is an illusion.**

**Or everything that seems impersonal- is actually deeply personal.**

**Love is truth.**

## **Luke 24:45-47**

Here's what he is saying- before the death and resurrection of Jesus is cosmic- world wide- to all nations...

The entirety of the Scriptures- the whole Bible- is telling you it is deeply personal love.

See the bit about repentance and forgiveness of sins?

That's personal. That's you.

Remember that the Resurrection promises that all wrongs will be set right? Its the justice we want. No one gets away with anything.

Well- we love justice when the finger is pointed out toward someone that wronged us. But the truth is- we have wronged others. And even worse- we have sinned against the God who so lovingly created us.

This creates the greatest predicament the world has ever known. The God who promises to set the world right for the ones he loves- well- the ones he loves are also the ones who broke the world.

And if he is going to remake the world- then the guilty must be brought to justice. What Jesus is saying is that when he suffered and died on a cross- he was receiving the justice, the punishment, the pain- for all the ways you personally have denied God- lived for yourself- and broken the world.

## **1 John 4:9-11**

**9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another.**

Atoning. At One.

When Jesus died- he was bringing us in.

He was keeping love eternal. So that we don't lose God and each other forever.

And look at the overflow.

We were disconnected from God by our sin, the sacrificial love of God made us AT ONE...with him.

Spiritual Connection.

Now receiving that love from God- we can freely- like he has- sacrificially overflow to others.

Deep Relationships now possible in a whole new way.  
And now- love has no expiration date. And because resurrection is personal- when I resurrect- I'll see my son again. I'll know him..and somehow- he'll know me.

Love does not expire.

### **Luke 24:46-49**

Notice- Jesus gives them a mission. Take this news- and make your whole life about loving others and getting this good news to the world.

That's the 3rd component of a deeply satisfied life. Transcendent purpose.

What could be more transcendent than making your whole life about loving others and telling them about the love and forgiveness offered in Jesus.

v 47- notice Repentance. You must turn around. You have to believe.

### **Acts 2:37-38**

**37 When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what should we do? "**

**38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

**Prayer Counselors/ Baptism Counselors**