

WHAT EASTER MEANS TO US

Mark 16:1-7

April 8, 2007 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

A. We gather here every Easter to commemorate and celebrate our Lord's resurrection, but why is it so important?

1. Because without it, the name of Jesus would be about as recognizable as the name Theudas.

2. Who, you are probably wondering, was Theudas? He lived a few years before Jesus. Like Jesus, he claimed to be the Messiah. Like Jesus, he attracted thousands of followers. Like Jesus, he was put to death by the Jewish religious leaders. But unlike, Jesus his movement did not last. His followers were scattered and his name was all but forgotten.

3. What made Jesus different from Theudas? The resurrection!

B. The resurrection of Jesus confirms three important truths about life. What are they?

I. FIRST, THE RESURRECTION CONFIRMS THAT JESUS WAS WHO HE SAID HE WAS.

A. NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A man who calls himself both "the Second Coming of Jesus" and "the Antichrist" is gathering followers among Hispanics in the United States after successfully spreading his no-sin, no-hell message through 30 other countries.

Jose de Jesus, a 60-year-old Puerto Rican now preaching in Houston, told ABC News, "Before the presence of God, there's no more sin." He preaches that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ means sin no longer exists and people now can do no wrong in God's eyes.

It's not hard to understand why people would respond so readily to a message like that, but de Jesus does draw a behavioral line. While morals are loose by any biblical Christian standard, he forbids drunkenness and drugs.

Reared in a housing project in Puerto Rico, a teenage de Jesus stole to support his heroin addiction. He says two angels came to him in a 1973 vision while he was imprisoned, and the "spirit that was in Jesus of Nazareth" entered him. After release from prison, he came to the United States and began working as a youth minister.

According to de Jesus, Antichrist is not an evil being but is the next incarnation of Jesus on earth. His followers often get "666" tattoos to demonstrate their devotion. They ply him with expensive gifts and mariachi bands greet him at airports when he travels. Posted on Mar 20, 2007 | by Mark Kelly

B. This Puerto Rican Messiah is not the first man to claim to be God.

C. Jesus also claimed to be God-John 5:19.

D. What's the difference, though, between Jesus' claim and that of all the others? The resurrection-v.6.

II. SECOND, THE RESURRECTION CONFIRMS THAT NO SITUATION IS BEYOND GOD'S POWER.

A. Jesus' horrible death on the cross appeared to nullify his claims to be more than a man, but God wasn't finished with him yet-vv.1-4!

B. Tony Campolo preaches a sermon taken from an elderly black pastor at his church in Philadelphia. "It's Friday, but Sunday's Comin'" is the title of the sermon. And, as Philip Yancey tells it, once you know the title, you know the sermon.

It's Friday, but Sunday's comin'. The world looks one way on Friday, but Sunday's comin'. On Friday, the forces of evil won over the forces of good, every friend and every disciple fled quaking in fear, the Son of God died on a cross. Yes it's Friday, but Sunday's comin'.

The disciples who lived through both days, Friday and Sunday, never doubted God again. They had learned that even when God seems absent, he might be closer than ever; when God looks powerless, he might be more powerful than ever; when God looks dead, he might

be coming back to life. They learned never to count God out, he's never out of the game. They learned that even when it's Friday, Sunday's comin'.

1. The resurrection of Jesus makes the word "hopeless" obsolete. It makes the word "impossible" meaningless.
2. What seems hopeless and impossible in your life? Remember Sunday's comin'
3. This is what Paul meant when he wrote-Romans 8:11.

III. THIRD, THE RESURRECTION CONFIRMS THAT FORGIVENESS IS AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE.

- A. The angel told the women that Jesus wanted to see the disciples in Galilee.
 1. The angel specifically said Jesus wanted to see Peter-v.7.
 2. All of the disciples forsook Jesus when he was crucified, but Peter's failure was the worst of all.
 3. I'm sure Peter thought his days as a disciple, even as a Christian were over. But the resurrection of Jesus meant that God had forgiven even him.
- B. You may have also failed God in your life and feel, like Peter, that its all over for you. But its not. If God can forgive Peter he can forgive anyone. If God can forgive me he can forgive anyone. Its not too late for you to be forgiven-II Corinthians 5:21.
- C. How? I John 1:9.

CONCLUSION

- A. This is why we are here today. This is why Easter and the resurrection is so important. It confirms....
 1. That Jesus is who he said he was-God.
 2. That God can do anything and there is no such thing as a hopeless situation.
 3. That forgiveness is available to everyone.
- B. It's Friday, but Sunday's comin'