

Jesus Wins

Everyday Easter Series

Did You Know?

Resurrection is actually a rare happening in the Bible. It barely happens in the Old Testament, only a few times in an extraordinary way, even when there is a mass resurrection in Ezekiel 37 of a whole army. In the New Testament, it becomes a major theme because Jesus' resurrection changes everything about the laws of the natural world. The word for resurrection means to literally "stand up again." It is defiance against the natural order set as a result of sin in the world. Jesus reversed the curse when He arose on that third day! And now that natural order holds no power over anyone who believes in Jesus.

Monday, April 1, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Discuss: This chapter is known as the "Resurrection Chapter" for in it Paul talks purely about the resurrection and its implications for what we believe and why it matters so much to Christians. But this is not some claim that spirits are raised without the body. Jesus' resurrection is an historical event. We know this because of the people Paul lists who saw Jesus after He was crucified, died and was buried. Our faith is not built on something that may be possible. It is built on eye-witness accounts of reality!

Act: Have you ever doubted the resurrection? In our world today, it is easy to do, for we are stuck in our empirical evidence-based sciences. We want to evaluate it and examine it and it has to be a recurring phenomenon for us to give credence to it. But take the words of Jesus who said after His resurrection that they are blessed who have not seen Him and still believe (John 20:29). The apostles were clear about historical eye-witnesses, because that is how you know an event happened, by hearing those who were there. And when Paul defends the resurrection, he points us not to some philosophy, but to people who were still living at the time of writing to interview them!

Tuesday, April 2, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-22

Discuss: The resurrection is the linchpin of the Christian faith. While the substitutionary death of Christ upon the cross is absolutely necessary, the resurrection proves that Jesus was innocent, that we can in fact be raised from the dead, and that there is life after death.

Because of Jesus' resurrection, we can be resurrected. The cross was evidence that we are free from our sin, but the resurrection was evidence that we are free from death. Sin causes death, but if we are seen by God as righteous, we don't die spiritually. Christ is our life!

Act: The Corinthian church was questioning the resurrection because they didn't believe that it happened. So when Paul wrote this chapter, he had the skeptics in mind. Maybe you used to be a skeptic. Short of performing a resurrection right in front of the Corinthians, Paul went to great lengths to use logic and reason to persuade them. The resurrection is essential to being able to believe in Jesus. Without it, our hope of eternal life can be called into question.

Wednesday, April 3, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:42-49

Discuss: Paul helps us to comprehend how a body that decays can be raised, and he finds an apt analogy in the seed that is sown in the ground. The seed goes into the ground as a tiny dead thing, and yet from its death, the life of the plant springs forth! Resurrection of the body is like that. We'll have a different type of body, but it is still a bodily resurrection!

Act: The bodily resurrection goes beyond the limits of the Jewish understanding of the resurrection at the end of time. They believed in a spiritual resurrection but Christians believe in a physical and bodily resurrection. It's hard to prove whether a spirit, which is unseen, lives on after physical death. But if you see a body animated and alive, you know it was resurrection. Our faith does not just suggest the spiritually implausible, it demands the physically impossible, because our God is the God of impossibility. The body is important to God. Let us nurture and take care of our bodies while we're here!

Thursday, April 4, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Discuss: There are some, in the last generation before Christ's return, who won't even die before they receive their new bodies. They'll be alive when they see Him coming in the clouds! The mystery is a lot harder with the analogy of a seed in the ground. These will be people who are still alive being changed in the twinkling of an eye. That's pretty quick! Death and sin have been trampled by the cross and resurrection, and we stand a new creature even now, but finally then!

Act: We must fully trust in the victory of Jesus on the cross and against the grave. While we may sleep for a time in the ground, our bodies will be made new! Perhaps we are in that last generation that will see Jesus coming on the clouds. We should live in such a way that

when we see Him coming on the clouds, we will be ready to be changed in the air in the twinkling of an eye! Are you ready to go home?

Friday, April 5, 2013

Read: John 11:17-27

Discuss: Jesus purposefully waited for Lazarus to be dead four days. The people had enough faith to believe He could heal Lazarus because they had seen it, but Martha approaches Jesus in doubt that He can do anything but mourn with her now. Jesus tells her one of the seven “I AM” statements of the Gospel of John, that He is the resurrection and the life. Anyone who trusts in Him does not die for eternity.

Act: Martha impressively responds to Jesus that she believes Him that He can raise Lazarus from the dead. But would we have that same kind of faith? It’s uncertain how much Martha realized what she was saying and the faith she claimed with her mouth, but what would we do? Would we be surprised that Jesus promised to raise Lazarus and then did it? Jesus wants to do miracles in our lives today, but would our surprise show a lack of faith?

Saturday, April 6, 2013

Read: John 11:28-44

Discuss: Martha runs back and tells Mary that Jesus is looking for her. When Mary goes out, though she has sat at Jesus’ feet and learned from Him a great deal, and seems to have a lot of faith in Him, responds in the same way that Martha did. Jesus actually weeps here. Only twice in the Bible does Jesus weep. Where is the other time He weeps? Why would you suggest Jesus weeps based on the evidence?

Act: Do we make Jesus weep with our unbelief? After spending all this time learning about Him and getting to know Him, why do we still doubt? The resurrection is sort of the tops of miracles. If God can bring the dead back to life, there is nothing He can’t do, and yet we wonder if He is able on a regular basis. May the truth and reality of the resurrection give each of us a confidence and boldness to ask God for the impossible! What impossibility do you want to trust God for first?

Sunday, April 7, 2013

Read: Matthew 14:22-33

Discuss: This is a text to prepare you for Pastor Jon's message this morning about Jesus' miracles in the gospels.

Act: Listen to the word that Pastor Jon has to share and ask God how you can best apply it to your life right now.