

The Day Death Died

(Easter 2018)

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

²⁰But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

⁵⁸Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 20-26; 58)

A. The world asks, "What's the big deal about Easter anyway?"

1. We say: "It's the day we celebrate God raising Jesus from the dead!"
2. We say: "It's the first day of the New Creation"
3. We say: "It is the day the hope of our resurrection was born!"

B. But the bottom line is, Easter is the day death died!

CHRIST RISEN

A. Easter means, "A dead man walked out of a grave alive!"

1. Easter means, "Not only did he walk out alive; he is still alive!"
2. Easter means, "Not only is he still alive, he is here with us in our midst!"
3. Easter means, "Not only did Jesus rise; but he promised we will too!"

B. Paul reminds us: A dead man walked out of a grave alive

1. Jesus was crucified. Jesus died. Jesus was buried - just as Scripture said
2. Jesus was raised on the third day - just as Scripture said

C. If you believe Christ is risen, it changes everything

1. Christ's resurrection is the only way to free us from our past

- a. Our past makes life difficult in the present
- b. That's how sin works. The future is often closed by the sins of yesterday (1 Cor. 15:17, 20)
- c. But because of Jesus' resurrection we can enjoy genuine freedom

1) First, sin no longer has mastery over us (cf. Romans 6-8)

2) Second, Christ's resurrection in heaven unites all things

2. Christ's resurrection is the only way to guarantee our future

a. Our world believes we're trapped by death and hurling toward extinction

1) So they live life as a continual spring break

2) And life has no meaning, moral consequences, or ultimate accounting

"When I die I believe I shall rot and that that is the end." (Bertrand Russell)

"The fundamental thing behind all motivation and all activity is the constant struggle against annihilation and against death. Death is absolutely stupefying in its terror and it renders anyone's accomplishments meaningless." (Woody Allen)

"That's all folks!" (Mel Blount's tombstone)

b. Jesus' resurrection means life, not annihilation, wins. Death dies

3. Christ's resurrection is the only way to redeem the present (1 Cor. 15:20)

a. How can we know if Jesus' resurrection has any bearing on us?

By its effect on our life

1) Jesus disciples' started preaching Christ risen

2) Jesus disciples' started seeing lives being transformed

3) Jesus disciple's experienced an "incomparably great power" (Eph. 1:19-20)

b. The power of the resurrection needs to be practiced in our daily living (1 Corinthians 15:58)

CHECKING REALITY

A. With all Easter means, it doesn't mean people stop dying

"I believe in the resurrection of the body" (Apostles Creed)

B. The God who made the first Easter possible promises to raise us too

"As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22)

1. Faith bridges the gap between the death no one denies and the life we long for

2. Let's not pretend this is easy to believe or that we have it all figured out

C. When Christ appears, he will make us to be like him

D. God has a plan. In Christ, he has conquered death. We call it Easter!