

Easter – why a life & death 2000 years ago matters for me today!

Intro: Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

Congregation: HE IS RISEN!!!! (he is risen indeed!)

Thursday- Sunday...

- **Thursday** he sat down with his disciples to celebrate Passover and institute the Lords Supper
- That night... he goes with his close friends in the Garden of Gethsemane to pray...
- In the Gethsemane... he suffers intense emotional anguish, anxiety, and begins to bleed from his sweat glands...
- He asks his friends to stay awake and pray... but they are overwhelmed and fall asleep..
- As Jesus stays awake and prays... an angel from the Lord is sent to strengthen him...
- **Early Friday morning..** He is arrested and brought before a kangaroo court... beaten, insulted, mocked, falsely accused..
- **Friday 12-3...** he is sentenced to die... but before he dies... he suffers the most horrific torture and abuse... stripped naked... humiliated... bleeding... broken... he is nailed to a cross and hung in the site of all...
- **Isaiah 53:3-6** He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- **Little wonder... John 19:30...**, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
- **But death could not hold him down!**
- **READ: Mark 16:6** And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.

That is what we are celebrating today RESURRECTION SUNDAY – the Christians changed their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday to commemorate the day Jesus ROSE FROM THE DEAD!

Everything we believe and hope for hinges on the death and resurrection of Jesus...

What did Jesus accomplish on the Cross? And what does it mean to us TODAY?

- **He is God – couldn't he just forgive us without the cross?**
- **The Cross is some sort of cosmic child abuse!**

A. Problem #1 – Evil, Death, Sin & Brokenness

Example 1: evil in the world – corruption, racism, war, poverty, sickness, greed!

Example 2: sickness, death & loss: Some suffer horribly with things like MS, huntingtins, Parkinson's, dementia, cancer, heart disease, PAIN... daily PAIN... and then DEATH... the loss of a parent... spouse... child... friend...

Example 3: Abuse, rejection, humiliation: I think of kids who are raised in abusive homes... spouses who are abused... I think of the horrific pain and suffering inflicted... I think of those who were supposed to be protected and were discarded and treated as lower than human.

Example 4: Mental health, anxiety, depression, bi-polar, schizophrenia, addiction:

MAN HAS YET TO SOLVE ANY OF THESE PROBLEMS! Evil and sin have infected each one of us

Romans 8:21-22 (NIV2011)

.. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Genesis 6:5 the Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.

THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM ISN'T POLITICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, OR FINANCIAL – ITS SIN – AND SIN HAS INFECTED PEOPLE

B. Problem #2: Justice must be served! Crime & Punishment

HE IS JUST – IMAGINE: today you go home and your house is broken into... your possessions stolen - ARG!! You feel violated, angry! now... imagine the police catch him and the thief says, “sorry” and now they let him go! Damage done. NO RESTITUION OR PUNISHMENT. Is this ok?

Everyone intuitively knows Injustice demands JUSTICE be served! We demand that those who do wrong pay for it. We want **accountability**. We want **change**. We want to see those who do wrong **punished!**

The thing is... **we judge others by their actions and ourselves by our intentions.**

Romans 6:23 (NIV2011)

For the wages of sin is death...

ANSWER to OBJECTION: God couldn't just “forgive” and still be GOOD!! How could he be good and turn a blind eye to all the evil in the world?

God loves us – YES... but he is also a Holy, Righteous, Judge... He cannot let sin go unpunished. The very people he longed to dwell with WERE THE PROBLEM – we are SINNERS.

C. The Solution – Jesus served our sentence! He paid our debt!

2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

PICTURE: THE JUDGE, THE CRIMINAL, THE VERDICT & SENTENCE – Jesus the Judge, got down from his seat and stood with us, as the accused, he then took our punishment, goes back up to the Judges seat and looks at us... and says, “I declare you innocent of any crime”

We have sinned against a Holy God...and the penalty of that sin was an eternal separation and death in a prison cell called Hell.

BUT JESUS MADE A WAY! For Justice to be served & us be made right with God!

HE DIED, SO WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO! HE PAID OUR DEBT & TOOK OUR PUNISHMENT

Why would he do that? Because HE LOVES US!

Answer to Accusation: cosmic child abuse! NO!!! BRILLIANT PLAN, EXECUTED BY A PERFECT GOD who LOVES US ENOUGH TO DIE FOR US!

John 10:17-18 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

And he offers this ALL AS A GIFT!!!!!! He won't FORCE people to LOVE him in return... But he demonstrates his great love for us! By paying for our sins! Every wrong thing we have done! He paid our debt!

He defeated death and sin! And he is COMING BACK!

Revelation 20:12 - 21:4 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, ...And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, ... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

He made a way – but we have a choice!

D. Response: The choice is ours! Yes? or, No?

We either give him our YES and accept what he did for us! Or we say NO to him and give up everything he promised to us...

Romans 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved!

Salvation is a FREE GIFT that will cost you everything. – unknown author

Jesus wants to be our Savior – YES! he did what we were unable to do!

But he is also LORD... and he calls us to FOLLOW HIM with our whole lives!

Matthew 10:38-39 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

This is what a YES looks like! We deny ourselves and pick up our Crosses – Meaning we put him on the throne of our hearts!

This is why me and Lou always say, “whatever is His way, is our way.” We are not able to follow him perfectly – no! but we set the course of lives to love, surrender and obey him in every area of our lives! Living by his grace through faith!

1. Some of you have NEVER experienced this... today you can make a choice! You can put your faith in Jesus today and will save you from your sins!
 - a. Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. Today, I declare that I believe you are the Son of God. That you died for my sins and rose back to life. I give you my life and ask you to be my Savior and Lord. Amen.
2. There are others in here... who have said YES... but then the busyness of life... stress... addiction... hurts... bitterness... “the cares of this world” have drowned out that YES.
 - Are you a believer here today but you feel stuck? Trapped?
 - Maybe you started strong – but now feel like you are failing...
 - Are you stuck in addiction?
 - Struggling with anxiety?
 - You relate to Jesus’ words... the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!

Hector’s Video Testimony: play 4 min video

Hectors testimony – Highlights the simplicity of following Jesus! and Jesus’ faithfulness despite our many failings as we stumble forward in following him!

This is our DAILY CHOICE. We follow him in his death by laying down our lives, so that we can LIVE with Him... this is what it means to FOLLOW JESUS.

1. Will you receive the forgiveness of your sins and the FREE GIFT of salvation? Yes/no
2. Believers: Will you continue to give Jesus your, “YES”? Yes/no
3. Reflect: who/what is on the throne of your heart? Write down anything you are holding onto. E.g. sin, struggles, stress, busyness, time, dreams, bitterness, your rights, etc.
 - a. Resentment, addiction, sexual sin, greed, dreams, finances, time...
 - b. Write down whatever comes to mind.

E. Response: don’t isolate! You need Jesus AND people! Next Steps for your “YES”

2 Corinthians 1:3-11 You also must help us by prayer...

Mathew 26:38, 41 Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” ... Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Paul AND Jesus modeled a YES life – and both showed them relying on God – AND other people! for support and PRAYER!

Your YES to Jesus is of MOST importance... but you will not be able to walk out your commitment to him if you isolate from his Body – PEOPLE.

1. **Attend the Set Free** next weekend and deal with your sin – sign up today or tomorrow!
2. **Get Baptized** – April 30th - sign up on the website – under discipleship
3. **Get connected** with other believers for encouragement and accountability! (small grp)

4. **Receive PRAYER** – today – after the service!

ENDING: He is RISEN! (church respond) He is RISEN INDEED!! PRAY

Maranatha Church! COME LORD JESUS COME!