

Easter 2022

As I look around, I see great events playing out on the world stage.

An unprecedented ability to communicate ideas and beliefs to any part of the planet and to any person is quickly becoming commonplace. And the ability to move produce and goods around the world makes it possible as never before to bring significant relief to regions that suffer. These world-shaping events are so important. They are literally changing the course of history. And as I watch, I wonder. I wonder what I am doing here. If the real action isn't out there doing the world shaping. And then I am reminded of two things.

First, I am reminded that no event in history has shaped the world like the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And Second I am reminded of this simple fact about life. Life does not go on forever. There is death. Every one of us must face our mortality. There is no military victory, no medical cure, no global village that can prepare any individual to answer the ultimate questions in life. And this morning I stand to proclaim Hope, the hope of His Resurrection. There is death. Yes. But life is in Jesus Christ, the hope of our resurrection.

Friends, you have come here this morning with a sense of anticipation and longing. There are sobering questions on your mind and much hangs in the balance. Is there hope? Is there new life? Is there reason for joy? The answer to your questions has arrived this day. It is here waiting for you.

It is a three-word message: Christ Is Risen! Good news for the depressed.

Good news for those who have lost loved ones. Good news. Good news to those who have lost their joy, Christ is risen.

Consider with me this morning the implications of Easter.

1. First, because of the Resurrection the disciples were changed.
2. Secondly, because of the Resurrection our view of death has changed.
3. Because of the resurrection, our view of Jesus has changed.

The Easter Choice

When faced with new realities, you have at least **three options** for how to respond (and it is nearly certain that you will opt for one of these three possibilities).

First, you can stay bewildered. You can let this event knock you flat on your back and then stay there.

Second, you can engage in world-class denial. You can look at the facts and ignore them.

Or third, you can, slowly perhaps, assimilate this new information. You may get knocked as flat on your back as the next person by this new realization, but eventually you pick yourself up. You embrace this new truth and then go through the long, sometimes painful, process of re-assessing life in the light of this new evidence.

This is the Easter choice. When faced with the incredible proclamation that Jesus rose again from the dead, you can be agnostic and cynical by saying that you don't know what to make of this but then neither are you going to try. Who cares anyway? Or you can deny it. The whole thing is fiction, fantasy, a pious wish but something that never really happened. Or you can move past the shock toward acceptance. But let me caution you: if you are going to accept the truth of the bodily resurrection, you need to let it change you totally.

That's the Easter choice. The problem for most of us is that we are not surprised enough by Easter to realize we face a choice. Easter is a part of the background scenery of our lives. We've never been afraid of Easter, never been bewildered by it. Believing that Jesus rose again from the dead becomes a little like believing the earth is round and that it orbits the sun. Once upon a time people didn't know that. They thought the earth was flat and that the sun orbited the earth. It caused quite a stir when this view had to be revised. But that was a long time ago and now we accept that picture of our solar system without much thought. Sure the world is round and we orbit the sun, but what does that have to do with anything? It doesn't change what I have to do at work tomorrow, does it?

Is that what Easter becomes for us? We believe it happened but then, we've always believed that. Even Easter has somehow become part of the "routines" of this world. So why would it have much of an effect on what we do tomorrow? Easter is no longer shocking for us--it surely does not make us re-evaluate everything else we think we know. And anyway, we're not sure we want to have everything in our lives changed.

Of course, if we can believe in the resurrection at all, it is a gift of faith granted to us by the prior gift of grace. But if we have received that grace and accept the truth that gets proclaimed from every Christian pulpit in the world each Easter Sunday morning, then we have to know that this **truth changes everything**. This is not some fact we can ponder just once every twelve months. **This changes everything.... and on EVERY day.**

(by Scott Hoezee from Comments and Observations)