



MESSAGE GUIDE

APRIL 20, 2025

“LIKE NO OTHER-PART 7:” JESUS THE LORD



LUKE 24:1-7; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-7

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LEAD PASTOR

What an incredible week we have had this past week, starting with last Sunday night's worship gathering as we entered into what the Church has historically called, "Holy Week." That led into special times all through the week where many people came through the Stations of the Cross and experienced the presence of Jesus at a much deeper level, leading into our Good Friday service where we mournfully remembered the death of Jesus, culminating with the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus!

1. HOW HAVE YOU PREPARED THIS PAST WEEK FOR THE CELEBRATION?

2. MAYBE THIS WEEK HAS BEEN DIFFICULT, AND YOU HAVE NOT HAD TIME TO PREPARE. WHAT BROUGHT YOU OR MAYBE WHO INVITED YOU TO JOIN THE CELEBRATION?

This celebration of the resurrection of Jesus is at the very core of Christianity. It is the heartbeat of Christianity. In fact, everything else in Scripture hinges on this one historic, biblical claim that Jesus rose bodily from the dead. The biblical claim is that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Jesus is a false prophet unworthy of our allegiance, and no rational person should follow Him.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: *"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins"* **(1 Corinthians 15:17, ESV).**

C. S. Lewis, the great author and apologist from the last century wrote, *"...to preach Christianity primarily meant to preach the Resurrection."* **(1 Corinthians 15:17, ESV).**

And according to recent research, 2/3 of all Americans (not just evangelical Christians) say they believe that the biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate.

But from a belief IN something to a transformation BY something are two different things. So, we have two things going on here simultaneously. We have the FACTS of Jesus' resurrection. And...We have the MEANING of Jesus' resurrection. So, there is evidence of the facts of Jesus' resurrection, but live in an age where people are less convinced by evidence, because there can be a lot of "evidences" that people can bring out to try to prove



MESSAGE GUIDE

APRIL 20, 2025

all kinds of things. And what difference does it really make?

The level of evidence to support a claim is only as important as the level of the claim. And the more important the claim, the more important the evidence that backs up the claim.

So, what if the claim is that the God of the universe created us to be in relationship with Him and to live in a world of beauty, truth, harmony, and fullness, but all of that has gone awry. Everything is “out of order” of the way God created it to be, because sin—that is willful intent to go our own way, thinking we know better than God—has corrupted us, our relationships, and the entire world. And what if the claim is that in order for all of life to be restored into a re-created world of beauty, truth, harmony, and fullness can only happen by God Himself experiencing death and being resurrected as the first expression of this restored order. And what if the claim is that God has done exactly that by coming into this world in Jesus of Nazareth who lived as the fullest expression of this co-habitation of God/Man—Jesus, fully God, fully man. And that He experienced real, bodily death and was re-born, resurrected as proof that He is God and that He invites all of us into this resurrected life.

In other words, The resurrection of Jesus is more than just giving us a ticket to heaven. It is about new life beginning now in His resurrected presence indwelling us and giving us the security of life everlasting. As Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.”* (John 11:25, ESV).

3. WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE THAT YOU ARE LIVING THE RESURRECTED LIFE RIGHT NOW?

4. IF YOU ARE NOT EXPERIENCED THE RESURRECTED LIFE THAT FAITH IN JESUS BRINGS, WHAT IS KEEPING YOU FROM RECEIVING IT TODAY?

There is evidence that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, rose bodily from the dead. And this is very well the most significant claim of all time, because it's not just about physical life and death, but it's about eternal life.

Good historians are always wanting to get to the earliest source material for whatever fact or evidence they are researching. Regarding the resurrection of Jesus, what's interesting is that the Gospels and the book of Acts (although essential sources for Jesus' resurrection) are not the earliest source material. The most important resurrection testimony comes from a previously hostile skeptic who did not follow Jesus during his ministry—Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus. Here's his account in 1 Cor. 15:3-7—



MESSAGE GUIDE

APRIL 20, 2025

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles” (1 Corinthians 15:3-7, ESV).

Paul is declaring that the resurrection of Jesus was “of first importance.” Paul is saying he received it—He didn’t create it. It was passed on to him. Almost all scholars across the theological spectrum of liberal to conservative agree that this is the earliest development of a creedal statement of the resurrection of Jesus that was developed within months of Jesus’ death and was passed on by Paul to the church in Corinth in AD 53-55. So, this is not some made up fable created years or decades later after Jesus’ death!

To help us know the bottom line, read this quote from a world-renowned scholar, Dr. Jeremiah Johnston:

“We’re free to say Jesus wasn’t resurrected, but we’re not free to disagree with established facts. We’re free to disagree with the women’s experience and interpretation of the resurrection, saying, “Oh, perhaps they were mistaken or confused.” But please understand that no one can support that decision based on the archaeology, or history, or the evidential record. They’re simply disagreeing with the earliest reports and the earliest eyewitnesses. They’re disagreeing with the very first witnesses—the actual people who experienced the resurrected Jesus—with the archaeological evidence, with history. No, we’re not free to disagree with the actual sources. We’re not at liberty, intellectually, to make up some kind of story and say falsely, against all the evidence, that Jesus was not buried or that his body was thrown into a ditch and eaten by dogs (yet another theory). At that point, we’re just making up our own sources and creating our own “facts” unhinged from the best evidence. The facts are established: Jesus died on the cross, he was placed in a known tomb, and he was visited by women who were related to his followers and disciples. Much to their consternation, these women discovered that the tomb was open and Jesus’ body was gone. And then they encountered an angelic visitor who knew why that was so and explained that Jesus was not there and had risen. The implication was, of course, that Jesus wasn’t in any of the other tombs either. His body was nowhere to be found because he had been raised” (Johnston, (Body of Proof), 102-103).

5. WHAT STOOD AT TO YOU FROM READING THIS QUOTE?

So, what difference does this all make?

First, Jesus’ resurrection proves He is the Son of God. The Apostle Paul wrote, “[He] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord”



MESSAGE GUIDE

APRIL 20, 2025

(Romans 1:4, ESV). He is LORD OVER ALL, like no other, King of kings and Lord of lords. He is our Rock and Redeemer, our Savior and Deliverer.

Second, This means that death holds no power over us! Paul says, *“The last enemy to be destroyed is death”* **(1 Corinthians 15:26, ESV).** A little earlier in the same letter, Paul wrote, *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”* **(1 Corinthians 15:20, ESV).** This means that *“‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* **(1 Corinthians 15:54b-57).**

Third, This means that whatever you’re facing right now, whatever fears grip you, whatever suffering you’re enduring, whatever addiction, struggle, challenge, problem, uncertainty that consumes you—YOU HAVE A POWER GREATER THAN WHATEVER DARKENS YOUR DOOR OR LOOMS IN YOUR HEART. We are promised that the best is yet to come, resurrected power penetrates our lives, and we belong to a family of the redeemed who bear witness to the new creation and everlasting life.

6. IN WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE DO YOU NEED THE HOPE THAT COMES FROM JESUS' RESURRECTION POWER?

Without question, there are scores of people who wonder, What is the point of life? But the resurrection of Jesus is what gives us hope. According to Jesus, it gives us purpose. Your whole life can be poured out in a God-serving way. *“That’s what the resurrection does for us. We are and continue to become the people who bring hope”* **(Body of Proof, 117).**

NEXT STEPS:

- If you want to learn more about joining us on mission to be hope-bearers to the world, text **“HOPE”** to 317-707-6462.
- If you’re ready to learn more about what it means to take your next step with Jesus, text **“FOLLOW”** to the same number, and we’ll reach out to you.

