

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 16TH - 17TH, 2022 // RESURRECTION WEEKEND

WHY WE'RE HERE (LUKE 24:1-8)

THE LIGHT AFTER IMMENSE DARKNESS

The entire Old Testament points to the fact that not only would a Savior come to restore mankind, but that restoration would come through Him giving His life (Deuteronomy 21, Isaiah 53, Exodus 12).

- Because humanity had strayed so far from God, **a sacrifice had to be made to pay for the sins of the world and open a door so we could commune more closely with God.**

"HE IS NOT HERE, BUT HE HAS RISEN!"

Jesus' death wasn't as much the key to humanity's restoration as was His resurrection. Good men and women have given their lives to physically save others, but **the Son of God gave His life for the salvation of our souls.**

- **He was also raised from the grave in order to share His Spirit and show us that we can be spiritually and eternally resurrected.**

CHRISTIANITY HINGES ON THE RESURRECTION

The belief that Jesus willingly died and rose again on the 3rd day for our sins to be forgiven is the bedrock of the Christian faith. **We believe that Christ was more than just a good man, He is the Creator of the Universe and Savior of mankind.**

- **Without the resurrection there is no Christianity or hope of salvation.**

UNDESERVED (MATTHEW 27:32-44)

UNPRECEDENTED BRUTALITY

The Roman empire had mastered the most extreme way to punish criminals. Crucifixion was not just a death, but a humiliating and painfully slow death typically caused by suffocation, heart failure, or blood loss.

- In Jerusalem where Jesus was arrested and tried, they would take people to Golgotha for public crucifixion.

WHY DID A PERFECT MAN HAVE TO DIE?

Jesus broke no laws or sinned, but because He came as a remedy for the broken ways of mankind, selfish people had Him killed.

- Jesus' death was also a plan set forth since mankind's sin in Genesis 3. Though it was awful that not only an innocent man, but the Son of God had to die, it was necessary to deal with our evil.

AN ATONEMENT HAD TO BE PAID

The fact Jesus was crucified between 2 criminals wasn't accidental. The placement of the Savior of the world between sinners was a physical representation of a spiritual transaction.

- Because humanity was fallen, **God placed Himself among us, lived a life that we're to model, and died to pay for the forgiveness of our evil actions and thoughts.**

WE DESERVED IT, NOT HIM

Jesus was spat upon, mocked, beaten and killed for humanity. He became the object of the punishment we deserved, but **in His love for us He bore our shame and agony.**

- **The knowledge that our mistakes led to the Son of God being crucified should humble us and inspire us to distance ourselves from evil.**

TORN APART (MATTHEW 27:50-54)

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

After exceptional torture and 9 hours of hanging on the cross, Jesus "cried out again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit."

- Matt records **"suddenly the curtain of the sanctuary was torn...** the earth quaked, and the rocks were split." This "terrified" several soldiers so much that they acknowledged "this Man was the Son of God!"

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE VEIL

The veil in the Jewish temple began during the time of Moses in Exodus 26 when the Jews were told to construct a mobile tabernacle to worship and house the presence of God.

- This exotic 4-inch thick curtain was crafted to be a dividing line between the Holy of Holies that housed the Ark that represented God's Spirit, and humanity.

A SEPARATION THAT GOES WAY BACK

The separation from the fullness of God's presence began with Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 and continued with the rebellion of God's people in the Old Testament.

- Because of our evil and sinful ways, God limited human access to Him throughout the OT (Isaiah 59:2). But, there was a plan in motion to restore that relationship.

"FROM TOP TO BOTTOM"

When we race through scripture we often miss amazing nuances. The fact that Matthew mentions that the veil was ripped from "top to bottom" shows that this was an act from heaven and not from man.

- **Through Christ's death, God extended an invitation to all people to come and build a relationship with their Creator.**

A RESURRECTION BEFORE THE RESURRECTION?

This is odd. Before Jesus' resurrection on the 3rd day, Matthew 27:52-53 says "tombs were also opened" and many deceased saints came out and "appeared to many."

- The tombs were opened at His death, but they didn't enter into Jerusalem until after Jesus' resurrection. This may have been a plan to confirm the reality of His resurrection.

RESULTS OF THE TEAR (ROMANS 8:11-17)

A REVERSAL OF OUR MISTAKES

The veil being torn was an undoing of the separation between God and man, and the resurrection of Christ was an undoing of the fear of death. Both of these things were brought upon us by our sin.

- **Today we celebrate the grace and mercy of God to give us a blank slate and fresh start!**

BECOMING THE TEMPLE OF GOD

The tearing of the veil was symbolic of the Spirit of God no longer residing in a building, but in His people. This makes followers of Christ the temple of God.

- **This not only shows us His love for us, but that He is with us all of the time! It also shows us that we are of tremendous value to our Creator!**

THE "SPIRIT OF ADOPTION"

Because we have full access to God, we can become adopted children of the King. In this adoption we have freedom to not "live according to the flesh" that leads to death.

- Paul says **we don't have a "spirit of slavery to fall back into fear." We can be set free from our destructive tendencies and find true fulfillment and contentment!**

THE PROMISE OF ETERNITY

The veil tearing wasn't just an invitation for mankind to be reconciled to God, it was also a foreshadowing of our eventual resurrection.

- **One day everyone who has lived in a relationship with Jesus will be resurrected and given a "glorified body" and they will live forever with God in heaven. We're "coheirs" with Christ!**

IT WAS ALL FOR US!

- **Our resurrection was always the point!** Jesus loves us and wants the best for us.
- Because the veil was torn, we can be mended! **Today we have the opportunity to be forgiven, restored, and given the tools we need to live with purpose and honor because we have full access to God!**

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

- We live in a world that is drowning in confusion, hopelessness, fear, anger, lack of identity and purpose, and anxiety because there is a distance between God and us.
- God has made Himself accessible through the death and resurrection of Christ, and this access gives us **peace, hope, love, contentment, and restoration!**
- We have never lived in more chaotic or confusing times. The navigation of life, much less finding joy and peace, is becoming more difficult every day.
- We should care because **we have proven ourselves incapable of making it on our own. Our families, friends, society, and future is in jeopardy without God's guidance.**

IT IS TIME TO TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY

- Jesus died and was resurrected so we can be saved and changed, but **we must choose to get off our destructive path and live in relationship with God.**
- **We don't have forever to decide.** Everyday we get closer to our death and His return, and in the meantime lives are falling apart all around us.
- The Creator **God loves us and we have access to Him if we will humble ourselves and trust Him.**
- The Spirit that wants to dwell in us **saves us from the ramifications of sin (now and eternally), gives us direction, enables us to truly love, and teaches us our real value, worth, and identity.**