

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 29TH–31ST, 2024 // RESURRECTION WEEKEND

JESUS DIED. (LUKE 23:32–53)

The most painful, humiliating, excruciating death anyone could ever have experienced was a Roman crucifixion.

- It was considered so barbaric, inhumane, shameful, and brutal that it was outlawed by the Roman empire in 500 A.D.
- Crucifixion in Roman times was applied mostly to slaves, disgraced soldiers, and foreigners—it was hardly ever given to Roman citizens.

The Bible tells us that Jesus had also endured a Roman scourging, severe beating, and had carried His own crossbeam (roughly 100 lbs.) a half mile to the site of His death.

- There He was stripped naked, 7 to 9-inch square spikes were hammered through His wrists and both feet to the cross beam, and He was lifted 7 to 9 feet in the air on a cross before the mocking, jeering crowd.

Every breath would have been agonizing, as Jesus would have had to push up on His feet to allow for inflation of the lungs.

- As the body weakened and pain in the feet and legs became unbearable, the victim was forced to trade breathing for pain and exhaustion.
- While He was suffering unimaginable levels of pain and trauma, Jesus prayed a remarkable prayer—“Father, forgive them...” (vs. 34).

The Roman soldiers were gambling over His garments (vs. 34), the criminal on the cross reviled Him (vs. 39), and the religious leaders scoffed and mocked Him (vs. 35)—and yet, Jesus prayed for them.

- Even in His agony, Jesus' concern was for the forgiveness of those who counted themselves as His enemies.
- Many noted that Jesus was innocent (vs. 41, 47).

When Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them,” He was fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah 53:12; “He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.”

- “Intercession” means that Jesus Himself stepped in to intervene on our behalf so that those who were God's enemies could receive forgiveness from God.
- Jesus became the “mediator” between us and God.

It was on this Roman cross that Jesus provided forgiveness of sins for all who would ever believe in Him (Matt. 20:28).

- Jesus paid the penalty for all the sins that we commit when we “know not what we do,” and He paid for even the ones we've committed deliberately.
- It was His death that made forgiveness from God the Father possible.

We all need forgiveness from God because we all have committed sin (Eccl. 7:20 says, “...there is certainly no one righteous on the earth who does good and never sins”).

- All our sin is ultimately an act of rebellion against God, and when we live in our sin we make ourselves enemies to God.
- If our sins are not forgiven, we will spend eternity suffering the consequences of our sins.

One of the criminals hanging next to Jesus realized the seriousness of his own sin—he recognized that he had “receiv[ed] the due reward” of his deeds (vs. 41, ESV).

- But he acknowledged the holiness of Jesus, he called out to Jesus, and he believed that Jesus was who Jesus said He was.
- Jesus assured this man of the promise of everlasting life by being with Him (vs. 43).

God, as the perfect judge, rightly requires payment/restitution for sin against the law.

- God, as a forgiving and merciful Father, provided a way of salvation for His people.
- The cross answers the question, “How can God be perfectly loving and perfectly just at the same time?”

WHAT DOES THE CROSS MEAN?

- That the penalty of our sin required death and that God is just and holy (Rom. 6:23).
- That God proved His love in that Christ stood in our place and took our penalty for sin upon Himself when we were His enemies (Rom. 5:7–8).
- The cross bridges the gap of separation between God and humanity.

JESUS ROSE AGAIN. (LUKE 24:1–12)

Demoralized and shell-shocked, some of the women who had followed Jesus traveled to his tomb on the first day of the week to mourn their loss (Lk. 23:55).

- What the Bible records them finding could be the most outrageous, audacious, and unbelievable claim ever made in all of human history.
- The tomb was empty, and the body gone.

The entrance to the tomb would've been blocked by a two ton circular shaped stone, securely rolled in a channel, so only several strong men could move it.

- But the “stone [was] rolled away” (vs. 2), and the Roman Guard “became like dead men” (Mt. 28:4).
- Now the women stare into this empty tomb “perplexed” at what had happened.

As they were gazing into the tomb, suddenly, two men stood by them in shining garments.

- These two “men” are obviously angels, and just like angels announced the birth of Jesus, these two angels announced the resurrection.
- They ask, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?...He is not here...he has risen!” (vs. 5-6).
- The angels then reminded them of Jesus' words and the women leave to tell others the news.

BECAUSE JESUS ROSE AGAIN...

- We can be made right with God (Rom. 4:25)
- We can experience eternal life (Col. 2:13)
- We can receive perfect resurrection bodies (Phil 3:21)
- We can live differently and walk with God (2 Cor. 5:17)
- The resurrection of Jesus makes His offer of eternal life the most profound, life-changing, transformative and important message in all human history.

JESUS LIVES. (LUKE 24:13–35)

After Jesus' resurrection, Luke highlights two disciples (vs. 13) who were headed to a village named Emmaus from Jerusalem, where they'd most likely spent the week before celebrating Passover.

- As they walked together, the text tells us that they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened (vs. 14).
- It had been quite an eventful week in Jerusalem!

We're then introduced to a stranger who joins them on their journey.

- Amidst their confusion & despair, Luke tells us that, “Jesus Himself came near” (vs. 15).
- Even though the resurrected Jesus stood in front of them, they didn't recognize Him (vs. 16).
- We see the resurrected Jesus—walking, talking, and listening to two disciples who didn't even know it was Him (vs. 17–27).

Jesus didn't just die on a cross or rise again from the grave 2,000 years ago—He desires to walk and talk with His people today.

- Jesus' death bridged the gap of sin's separation.
- Jesus lives! His presence, power, and truth are available for anyone who would believe in Him.
- When the disciples reached their destination, they compelled this fascinating stranger to stay with them (vs. 28–29).

As they sat around the table—the most ordinary, everyday, yet intimate activity—with the resurrected Christ, their “eyes [were] opened” when He broke the bread (vs. 30–31).

- All along the journey, the eyes of these disciples couldn't recognize Jesus even though He'd been walking and talking with them.
- The problem wasn't that they didn't see Him or He wasn't talking—it was that they couldn't recognize Him.

Jesus doesn't hide Himself from us—He's at work all around us and His character and presence are in plain sight upon the pages of Scripture.

- God isn't silent—He speaks to us through His Word and Spirit as often as we'll listen.
- Often, we are distracted, and our hearts are looking to other practical saviors, so we don't recognize when He's right in our midst.

But when the disciples recognize that it was HIM—the resurrected Christ—instead of being full of despair and doubt, they said to one another, “Weren't our hearts burning within us while He was talking with us on the road?” (vs. 32).

- When our eyes are opened to the reality of Jesus as a living Savior who wants to walk, talk, and be in our everyday lives, and we dare to believe that because He's alive there is hope and victory, something happens...

Our hearts are ignited with the fire of faith and regeneration (vs. 32).

- These two disciples IMMEDIATELY returned to Jerusalem and told the others of the triumphant, risen Lord!
- Their hope shifted from being placed in the theoretical ideas of God's work to being placed in an actual person with whom they had walked, talked, and communed.

JESUS IS ALIVE AND DESIRES TO WALK WITH YOU.

- The invitation of Jesus isn't just to believe upon His death, burial, and resurrection...
- It is to surrender your life to Jesus fully in faith and to walk, talk, and commune with Him in relationship from now until eternity!
- Because of our distraction, idolatry, and heartache/grief, we sometimes don't recognize Him—but Jesus draws near to us.
- As we walk with Jesus, He unveils truth to us through His Word, revealing His identity and purpose in our lives and in our world.
- As we walk with Jesus we get a firsthand experience of His peace, presence, and hope.
- Walking with Jesus empowers us to testify of His transforming power and join in His mission of redemption in our world!

THE GOSPEL (GOOD NEWS).

- Jesus died on the cross to pay the sin debt you owed God and could never repay on your own.
- Jesus rose from the grave victorious over the power of sin and death—proving that He is God and that His sacrifice was sufficient.
- Jesus lives and has invited you to walk with Him as you surrender every part of your life to Him as a disciple.

GOD'S DESIRE IS TO DWELL WITH HUMANITY IN RELATIONSHIP FOREVER (2 COR. 6:16, REV. 21:3–4).

- Is that Your Desire?
- Do you want to surrender to Jesus as Lord, or simply try to use Him to get to heaven while staying in control?
- Have you believed on and received the risen Jesus in your life as Savior AND Lord?
- Are you living out a daily walk with Him as your Lord and your friend?