

“He’s Risen! Go and Tell!”

04-05-15

Who’s right? Who are we to believe? That’s the way it was that first Easter. To the chief priests, Pharisees and Scribes, the body of Jesus had been stolen by His disciples in the night and rumors of His resurrection had been spread around. According to the Greek scholars to whom Paul preached about the resurrection of the dead on his second missionary journey, such a notion seemed foolish.

So here we are on Easter Sunday morning with the Pharisees long gone and the ancient Greek culture buried in the sands of time! But instead of talking about Easter eggs, breakfasts, and chocolate bunnies, we instead proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! We do that because it’s true and important!

Open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 15. Paul, in his usual style, wants to make sure the people he’s preaching to have been paying attention! Look at verses 1-2, *“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.”* Paul knows the sinful heart of mankind and he knows how we believe for a while and then let other things get in the way of our faith and fall away. His message about Easter is of first importance, so he presents the Easter story very clearly and quickly! What’s so important about Easter?

Jesus died for our sins. Look at verse 3, *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.”* We sin each and every day! Our holy God demands we live up to His holy standard in our every thought, word, and action. His standard? *“You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy!”*

But what sinful person could possibly pay for sin or earn heaven through perfect obedience to God, when we’re conceived and born in sin? There’s no one! So God sent His holy Son into the world to die for our sins. Isaiah spelled it out clearly, *“He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities.”* The Son agreed willingly to sacrifice Himself because it was the Father’s Will and He loves us!

We have forgiveness through His blood shed on the cross. Who would have believed that on Good Friday? Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did! They took Jesus’ body down, wrapped Him in cloths and put Him in a new tomb.

Jesus was buried. The rest of Jesus’ followers were hiding, thinking they were next. But some women who loved Jesus, had to make sure He had a proper burial! It was the least they could do. They were courageous and didn’t fear either the darkness of being identified with Jesus Christ!

Three friends were discussing what they’d want people to say about them at their funeral. The first guy said, “I’d like them to say I was a great humanitarian, who cared for his community.” The second guy said, “I want them to say I was a great husband and father who was an example to follow.” The third guy said, “I want them to say, “Look, he’s moving!”

Jesus rose from the dead! When the women got to the tomb their biggest concern had been how they were going to roll the large stone away from the door of the tomb. They weren’t expecting anything else. But when they got there, the stone was already rolled away

and as they looked inside, they saw an angel who told them, *“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here!”*

Look at verse 4, *“that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”* The women had heard Jesus tell them He would rise from the dead, but it seemed too impossible to believe! By fulfilling His promise to rise from the dead, Jesus showed something more: He keeps His Word and that means we can believe every other thing He’s said!

By raising His Son to life, God the Father was declaring to the world, *“I accept His sacrifice for sin! He’s taken care of everything! There’s nothing you need to do! Death is a defeated enemy and heaven has an open door.”* In the resurrection, God declared you, me and the entire world, **“NOT GUILTY!”** You’re forgiven of every sin! Jesus died for you and He rose because He’s the living God!

Look at verses 5-7. They tell us **Jesus appeared!** Look, *“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.”*

On that first Easter Jesus appeared to Peter, who had denied knowing Him three times. The twelve, who really ought to have been the ones giving a proper burial to their teacher, but had run away into a valley of despair, because they believed Jesus was dead and wouldn’t rise. And Paul, who spent half his life bashing the Christian faith and tracking down Christians to arrest and kill them. Yet all these men are now in heaven, and you haven’t committed a sin so great that God won’t forgive you!

The Passion of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross would have meant nothing if there was no resurrection! The devil thought he’d won! Jesus had died on the cross. His limp, lifeless body removed from the cross and laid in a tomb secured, sealed, and guarded by Roman Soldiers. But death and the grave couldn’t hold Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

But the Easter story isn’t the end of the miracle, there’s one more thing! **Jesus is alive!** He walks with you each and every day and loves you with a never-ending love! He cares for you no matter what you do. His forgiveness and grace are always there!

Everything in the Easter story is important! But of first importance is: **Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!** Whoever believes will be saved! Listen to Jesus’ word from John 11:25-26, *“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”*

These are Jesus’ own words to you! And because they are, you can believe them! And whoever does believe has eternal life! This Easter morning, be filled with the overflowing light and grace of Jesus Christ! Praise and worship Him, for He is your Risen Lord and Redeemer! Tell everyone you meet, Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!