

Conversation Starters

- How was your Easter holiday?
- What has Easter meant to you in the past?

Discuss

This weekend's Easter message covered 5 things you may not have known about Easter.

1. Something really happened

No one denies that something happened on Easter over 2,000 years ago. Sure, people disagree over what happened, but no one disagrees that something significant happened. We know that Jesus was a real historical figure. We know that not long after his crucifixion and resurrection his number of followers increased exponentially, and have continued to increase since then. Writing in this topic, N.T. Wright said,

“The early Christians did not invent the empty tomb and the ‘meetings’ or ‘sightings’ of the risen Jesus in order to explain a faith they already had. They developed that faith because [of what they saw, because of what they experienced, because what they didn’t think was going to happen – or could happen – DID].”

- What do you think happened that first Easter Sunday?
- Do you have any questions about how or what transpired that day?

2. It ended religion

Read Luke 22:44-46. Something happened in these verses that ended thousands of years of religion.

- What detail from these verses brought an end to religion to God and ushered in a new era of relationship with God?
- Why is that important for Christ-followers to know?
- How does a relationship differ from a religion?

3. It leveled the playing field

The resurrection of Jesus purposefully leveled the playing field culturally in terms of sex, class, role and position, unleashing a revolution through the Christian movement against sexism and racism.

Read John 20:11-18.

- Why does the detail that Mary was the first one to witness the resurrection matter?
- What does that tell you about God’s heart towards those the vulnerable and outcast?
- What does it mean that the playing field is level at the foot of the cross?

4. It lasted 40 days

For forty days after His resurrection, Jesus talked and walked and taught and interacted with people. Forty days, or even years, is a length rich in biblical meaning and history. The life of Moses was divided into three forty-year segments – forty in Egypt, forty in exile, and forty with the people of Israel. Moses also spent forty days on Mt. Sinai receiving the law. Elijah spent forty days on Mt. Horeb. But most significantly of all, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness being tempted, but also being prepared for his earthly ministry. It’s as if Jesus took forty days to prepare the apostles for their ministry, which was going to be the building of His movement, His mission, His church.

Read Acts 1:1-3 and Matthew 28:17-20.

- What did Jesus do during the 40 days following his resurrection?
- What does that tell us about the importance of those things?

5. It can happen to you

2000 years ago the power of God was reflected in a single life with such a clear demonstration of might and energy that all of human history was forever changed, culminating in raising that life, physically, from the dead. And through the resurrection of Jesus, God demonstrated His ultimate power – because there is no greater power on earth than power over death.

But then the Bible says something radical: that the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available for our life. Read Ephesians 1:19-20 and Romans 6:4.

- What does it mean for your life that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to you?
- If you’re a Christ-follower, do you feel like you live as if that power is truly in you? If you’re not, is there an area of your life that could use a resurrection?

Next Steps

- What one thought or action do you need to put in place this coming week to apply what you learned from this message?
- What do you need to stop or start doing in light of the Easter message?

Pray

Thank God for loving us so much that He sent His Own Son to die for us and offer us the chance to experience resurrection. Pray for your friends and family that don't know Christ – pray that they would come to him and experience the transformation he offers.