

Easter's Declaration

Scripture:

Mark 16:1-20 "Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ²Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" ⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. ⁵And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." ⁸So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. ⁹Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. ¹⁰She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. ¹²After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. ¹⁴Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵And He said to them, "**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.**" ¹⁹So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."

Introduction:

Easter is a day of declaration. It declares that life has overcome the power of death. Death in its many forms has been defeated by the power of the resurrection. Romans 8:11 declares that if the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwell in you, that same Spirit will give life to you. How we need the indwelling Spirit to give life to our bodies, our dreams, our hopes and ambitions. Without Him death reigns. Have you ever thought about the kind of declaration this Spirit of life is making because of the resurrection.

I. Easter declares forgiveness.

If God were not willing to forgive sin, heaven would be empty.

German Proverb

- A. Sin had caused the disciples to argue over who was the greatest. The resurrection proved Christ forgave them.
- B. Weakness had caused Peter, James and John to fall asleep when Christ had asked them to wait with Him.
- C. Fear had caused Peter to deny the Lord three times the night of Christ's arrest.
- D. Christ didn't just rise from the dead to be heard from no more.

1. He appeared to his disciples.

2. He sent a special message to Peter.

Mark 16:7 "But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

- E. Jesus famous words on the cross echo down through the ages.

Luke 23:34 "Then Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**"

- F. The sin that separated us from Father God has been dealt with by the blood of Christ.

I John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Title: Limited Forgiveness

A pastor's son and his mom had been to a shopping mall and the boy had acted badly, wanting this and that, running off, etc. As they were driving home, he could sense her displeasure and said, "When we ask God to forgive us when we are bad, He does, doesn't He?" His mother replied, "Yes, He does." The boy continued, "And when he forgives us, He buries our sins in the deepest sea, doesn't He?" The mom replied, "Yes, that's what the Bible says." The boy was silent for awhile and then said, "I've asked God to forgive me, but I bet when we get home, you're going to go fishing for those sins, aren't you?"

II. Easter declares joy.

- A. The disciples were disappointed and discouraged.
- B. Some times people feel like life has come crashing down around them and joy flees away.

The story is told of a young man who came to a renowned doctor in Paris complaining of depression. He asked what he could do to get well. The doctor thought of a well-known young man named Grimaldi, a leader of café society who cut a wide and lighthearted swath through Paris nightlife. The doctor told the young man, "Introduce yourself to Grimaldi. Let him show you how to enjoy yourself and you will get well." The downcast young patient looked up with a sardonic smile and said, "I am Grimaldi."

He who tickles himself may laugh when he pleases.

-- German proverb

- C. When the disciples saw the Lord after His resurrection, they were made glad.
John 20:19-20 *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, **"Peace be with you."*** ²⁰*When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord."*
 - 1. They were alone no longer.
 - 2. Christ was not just a memory.
 - 3. He was a real and living presence.
Hebrews 13:5-6 *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, **"I will never leave you nor forsake you."*** ⁶*So we may boldly say: **"The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"***
- D. The reason for our joy is because Easter declares the presence of God with us every day of our lives.

III. Easter declares a hope for the future.

- A. Jesus Christ has conquered death and hell.
John 5:24 ***"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."***
- B. We were once enemies of God but no longer.
Romans 5:10-11 ***"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."***
- C. Our future now includes victory as we reign in life with Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:17 “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is our hope today. It is our assurance that we have a living Savior to help us live as we should now, and that when, in the end, we set forth on that last great journey, we shall not travel an uncharted course, but rather we shall go on a planned voyage-life to death to eternal living.

Raymond MacKendree

D. God has great plans for each of His children.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity;”

1. If we’re in turmoil, we can look for peace to be our portion.
2. If we’re in despair about tomorrow, he brings hope for a better future.
3. If we feel alone, we can call on Him and He will answer us.
4. If we’re held in any form of bondage, He has made a way of escape.