

## **Because of Jesus**

**John 20:1-20; Luke 24:25-27, 46-47; Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 1:3.**

Today, we celebrate that Jesus' resurrection has changed everything.

John 20:1-10 Mary, Peter, and John all realize that something has changed, but what?

*Jesus changes everything!*

Let's look at three things that changed because there was an empty tomb on the first Easter morning.

### **Peace In Our Hearts**

John 20:19-20 The disciples are locked in their room, afraid. The word translated as "fear" is "phobos" in Greek (English "phobia"). It means "dread" or "stricken with terror."

Then Jesus walks into the room and says "Peace." He shows his wounds so that they KNOW it's him, and a transformation happens in these frightened followers. They become overjoyed to the point of rejoicing. Jesus arrives, and peace arrives with him.

"Peace be with you" is a statement of what Jesus just accomplished. He is bringing peace between the Father in heaven and his children on earth.

John 20:11-18 Mary is also transformed on this day. Alone, she grieves not only for the life lost of Jesus but for the body seemingly lost as well. She is overwhelmed! Can you relate?

Then she hears a familiar voice speak her name. She turns and sees that it is Jesus. Here grief turns to joy! Her confusion turns to peace. She can't wait to tell the others what she has seen. Can you relate to Mary? Allow the words of Jesus, "Peace be with you," to go deep into your heart.

### **Pardon for Our Sins**

While most of us welcome the idea of more peace in our lives, we may not grasp the need for a pardon. A pardon frees someone from legal consequences or blame for a committed offense. No matter how many times Jesus told his followers that he came to die for their sins, they just never seemed to grasp it.

Luke 24:25-27 Two men are on their way home to the village of Emmaus, when Jesus appears to them. They are complaining and questioning everything that has happened in Jerusalem. Jesus calls them "foolish" and "slow to believe." Jesus explains from the Old Testament how He, the Messiah, was to suffer and die for the sins of His people. Isaiah 53:3

After disappeared from the two men from Emmaus, these two ran back to Jerusalem to tell the others that they saw Jesus.

Luke 24:46-47 Jesus shows up again amid the disciples. He explains that the resurrection is all about a radical, life-changing forgiveness. The resurrection means our slate is wiped clean, and the charges against us have been canceled. Let that sink in! We're not just forgiven; we're set free to live in the fullness of God's grace.

## **Pouring Out to Our Neighbors**

Easter isn't just about me, its also about loving, serving, and helping others.

Matthew 28:18-20 The last thing Jesus told his followers to do was "pour out to your neighbors."

That means, Jesus has called us to pour out to our neighbors:

- By helping them see Jesus in such a way that they want to follow him as a disciple.
- By helping them immerse themselves into a life filled with love only found in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- By setting the example of doing everything Jesus commanded us to do.

More than once, the apostle Paul used the phrase, "I am being poured out like a drink offering." He was describing how his actions were a sacrifice. Let's be people known for our overflowing love, not just in words but in action. Easter challenges us to have the same mindset as Christ, who didn't just talk about love but lived it in the most sacrificial way possible.

## **Jesus Changes Everything**

1 Peter 1:3 "He has given us new birth into a living hope." How? "Through his resurrection."

Those are not flowery words written by a poet. Those are the words of an old fisherman named Peter.

—He was the same guy who ran to the tomb with John.

—He was the same guy that Jesus once referred to as "Satan." —He was the same guy who cut off a guard's ear in the garden the night before Jesus died.

—He was the same guy who denied Jesus three times just before Jesus went to the cross.

—And he is the same guy who preached with such boldness just 50 days after Christ's resurrection that thousands started following Jesus.

Do you know why Peter was so changed? Because of Jesus!

Peter discovered peace in his heart, found a pardon for his sins, and started pouring out to his neighbors because of Jesus. Jesus changes everything.

What about you? Is Easter just a distant historical event that you join in remembering every year at this time? Or has the resurrection of Jesus Christ changed you? If it has, then you like all others who have been changed, possess an unshakeable peace, a radical pardon, and a call to overflow with love to our neighbors. Let's live in the reality of the resurrection every day, allowing these truths to shape how we live and love. Let's make Easter a daily reality in our lives!