

CHRIST IS RISEN

Matthew 28:5, *“The angel spoke to the women. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead, just as He said would happen. Come, see where His body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that **He has risen from the dead.**”*

It all started with a great earthquake, then an angel descended from heaven and the earth shook as he rolled the stone away from the tomb. His appearance was like lightning when it flashes in the darkness and his robes were white as snow. When the women arrived at the tomb it was open and empty. The angel was sitting on the stone and told them "He is not here. **He is risen** just as He said He would. Go and tell the other disciples that **He is alive** and that He will meet them in Galilee."

“Jesus who was dead, is now alive.”

That is what Easter is all about!

Really! Is this all that Easter is about? Some person 2,000 years ago coming back to life. If you stop and think about it in the context of Biblical history it may not be particularly amazing. Someone who was dead coming back to life? Sure, it doesn't happen every day, but it is not without precedent. In the OT the prophet Elijah raised a widow's son from the dead. In the NT Jesus raised Lazarus. He also raised the widow's son and Jarius' daughter. Note, even Peter raised Tabitha.

In hospitals today, a patient being brought back to life is almost common place. It is not unusual for a person to stop breathing and their heart to stop beating, and for them to be resuscitated. There are probably some people here at Cornerstone who know of someone who was dead and was brought back to life. It's even a standard part of some medical procedures. Doctors intentionally stop people's hearts and put them on heart and lung machines so that they can repair damage to the heart muscle. During this procedure the patient is on life support and without the machines the person would be physically dead.

Therefore, in a world where people come back from the dead every day, what is so important about Jesus' resurrection? If this were just another *restoration of life* like the raising of Lazarus, or those who were brought back by modern medicine, then there really would be nothing to celebrate at Easter. But Jesus' resurrection was of a different order completely. All of those we have referred to, who were brought back to life, were restored for a few more years of mortal life. However, Jesus' resurrection was to **eternal life**. Those others mentioned were brought back for more of the same! But Jesus' resurrection was a resurrection to glory.

Notice, all the other people who were raised from the dead eventually died again. Is Lazarus still alive? I am sure if he were still alive here on the earth then we would have heard about him. If you were clinically dead and were brought back to life I have some bad news for you. Your body will eventually wear out and your heart will stop beating once again.

You may have cheated death, but it can only be for a few more years - not forever! But Jesus didn't just cheat death with His resurrection. He defeated death! His was a resurrection to **eternal life**. Not to a few more years of earthly life but to an eternity of life in glory. And because He lives we too can live! Notice, without Jesus securing eternal life through His Death and Resurrection, none of us would be able to receive the gift of eternal life.

Therefore, Jesus' resurrection was at the outset about Him defeating death, yet it was also about more than His resurrection alone. The resurrection is the proof that we are released from the sentence of death. The Bible calls Jesus the **"first fruits of the resurrection."** His is the first of all who will rise to eternal life at the end of time. So Jesus' resurrection is really about our resurrection too! It is about the ultimate fulfillment of the promise of eternal life.

Jesus' resurrection is about Him defeating death not just for Himself but for us also. It's something that is truly earthshaking! It is no accident that the story starts with an earthquake. The angel descended and the earth shook. Easter Sunday is about God (the source of all life) **invading a dead world**. It is about God shaking up the order of the universe to bring the dead back to life. If you think that Easter is just about some "holy man" 2,000 years ago rising from the dead, you have missed it completely. It is about God shaking up the order of the universe. It is about God changing the rules of life and death, of sin and salvation.

Easter is about the dawn of a new day like none other in the history of mankind. Easter is about God shaking up the world. If you leave here today and your life has not been shaken up then you haven't grasped the message of Easter. If your life has not been turned upside down by the **resurrection of Jesus**, then you don't really know what Easter is all about. So don't miss the point of Easter this year! If you have never given your life to Christ you are missing its true meaning. If you have given your life to Christ then let Easter shake up your life once more. Let the **new life** that Jesus gives turn your world the right side up.

Jesus Christ is alive, and because He lives, you live! The Resurrection didn't make a way for you to merely exist, it secured a life that is out of the ordinary. In John 10:10 Jesus said, *"I have come that you may have life and have life super-abundant."* Super-abundant life is full of power - **resurrection power!** Romans 8:11 boldly declares, *"The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, **He will give life to your mortal bodies** by this same Spirit living within you."* Easter Sunday is about God quickening "new life" to your mortal body by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit living within you! Notice it says, "Just as..." The very same way, and with the very same **power** that raised Christ Jesus from the dead!

The Bible tells us to "know Christ and the power of His resurrection" (Philippines 3:10). You cannot separate the two. Therefore, making a public declaration that **Christ is risen** is extremely powerful.

It confirms your full understanding and belief in the *resurrection power* and *divine life* that dwells in you.
Hallelujah - Christ is risen! Yes, He is risen indeed!

The **Paschal greeting** is a custom among Orthodox Christians, consisting of a greeting and response. Instead of "hello" or its equivalent, one is to greet another person with (Χριστός ανέστη) "Christ is Risen!" And the response is (Αληθως ανεστη) "Truly, He is risen," or "Indeed, He is risen!". This greeting is used extensively during the Easter Season and the hymn that everyone sings says, "Χριστός ανέστη εκ νεκρών, θανάτω θάνατον πατήσας, και τοις εν τοις μνήμασι ζωήν χαρισάμενος" - *Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down death, and to those in the tombs, bestowing Life.*

The words and tune are as old as Christianity itself, and are part of its universal heritage, being found in all the many languages of the Eastern Church. This hymn is joyously sung at every opportunity during the Easter season. Accompanied with the greeting and response:

Χριστος ανεστη!Αληθως ανεστη!

Christ is risen!
Truly, He is risen!