



CALLED TO MORE

A Lenten Series on Wrestling with Sin

Easter Sunday | Raised to Life

For the most up-to-date Easter ideas and collaborative conversation, join the Breakthrough Facebook Group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gnibreakthrough/>

Scripture Passage: Matt: 28:1-10; Ephesians 2:4-8

Call to Worship:

Death does not have the final word.

He is risen!

The redemptive power of Christ lives and reigns.

He is risen!

We are loved wholly, deeply, and completely.

Christ is risen indeed!

Opening Unison Prayer:

Resurrected Christ overwhelm our hearts with the Good News of this day! The empty tomb reminds us of your power over sin and death and frees us to live fully forgiven, redeemed and loved. By the strength of your Spirit, let our Alleluias fill us with such joy that we are transformed to live as your Easter people. We pray this in the beautiful name of Jesus. Amen.

Offering Introduction:

While fear can overwhelm, God shows us on this day of resurrection that there is an awesome power--to change the world, to subvert systems of injustice and to live contrary to the world as people of forgiveness and grace. This day we celebrate that God is in the restoration business, calling us into relationship and calling us home.

Offertory Prayer:

Thank you, great God, for restoring us, forgiving us, saving us and communing with us. Now receive these offerings as we honor you; and may they be used for your glory as we go out in the world to share these gifts with all we encounter.

Song Suggestions:

CLUW #190; UMH #318: 주 사셨다 / Christ Is Alive

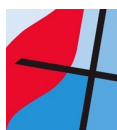
CLUW #193; MVPC #152; UMH #302: 예수 부활했으니 / Cristo ya resucit, Aleluya! / Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

CLUW #194; MVPC #155; UMH #308: 주님께 영광 / Tuya es la gloria / Thine Be The Glory

W&S #3105: In Christ Alone

CCLI #7119315 : Raise A Hallelujah

CCLI #7106807: Living Hope / Mi Esperanza Está En Jesús (Spanish, #7125175)



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Sermon

Scripture Passage ***Matt: 28:1-10; Ephesians 2:4-8***

Focus Statement We make mistakes, do things we regret and regret *not* doing other things. The good news of the Gospel is not only that Jesus died that we might be forgiven, but that he has been raised from the dead! In him, we too are raised from being dead, so that we can have new life, full of hope and promise.

ME Talk about about a time when a surprise or change in circumstances led you down a different path than you had planned. Were you afraid to surrender your own plans or expectations? Describe how this change was an unexpected blessing or led to something you may not have otherwise experienced. (For example, having to move unexpectedly or taking a detour and being surprised by a beautiful view.)

WE Sometimes our plans get disrupted. Or we get something we would have never expected. We make mistakes and fall short; we get caught up in “deadly” routines and behaviors - that prevent us from living fully. One great surprise has changed the course of all our lives and enables us to move from self-made plans and expectations into the life God has created. We celebrate that reversal today.

GOD Two women go to the tomb, a place for the dead. A guard of soldiers has been standing watch to make sure none of his disciples could steal his body and claim he was resurrected. These soldiers, policing the tomb, were to make sure Jesus “stayed dead.” No human power could stop God from overcoming death. An angel announces the news and a reversal of positions. The soldiers are so afraid that they become “like dead men.” Jesus lives, and those who would have him dead become deathly afraid!

The angel tells the women, “Do not be afraid.” This is actually *good* news for them. Despite their fear, their joy about Jesus’ resurrection moves them to run and tell the other disciples the good news. When they encounter Jesus, he says “Do not be afraid, go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” Fear no longer needs to control us, even if learning to live fearlessly doesn’t come naturally.

The Ephesians text reminds us we are deeply loved by God--loved so much that we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the power of God--that even when we were dead in our trespasses- or the places that we sin, Jesus Christ raises us to new life. Our sin does not define who we are, or who we will be. Instead, we are forgiven and raised to life. We are called to more.

YOU Think about what you expect out of life – where are you feeling stuck and how are you contributing to staying stuck? Imagine the new life that you could have if you weren’t feeling stuck, or how your life could be more abundant than it already is. Where might God be acting to change things in your life? Knowing that Jesus has died so you are no longer chained to your sins, imagine him taking you by the hand and saying “Do not be afraid. Go and do what I have made possible.” Even if you’re still afraid, like the two Mary’s, take the next step anyway.



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WE As we encounter the living Jesus, we can move forward, even if we are afraid. We do this not on our own strength but through the resurrection power that comes through Jesus Christ. As living testimonies to God's redemptive work in Christ, we cannot keep this good news to ourselves. We are called to go out and tell the world that Jesus is risen and that this is good news for all. *Name some concrete ways you can encourage the congregation to share their faith – whether through a mission event, sharing their story with loved ones and colleagues, etc.*

Notes for Preaching During COVID-19

In the "Me" and "We" sections of this sermon, the preacher is encouraged to talk about how a change or surprise led to an unexpected blessing. If you (the preacher) have found unexpected blessings through changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, you can share your own personal experience. If you choose to do so, be sensitive to the fact that for many of your congregants, this pandemic is devastating and does not feel like a blessing at all. You may decide another example is better at this time.

The important part is that the great surprise of Jesus' resurrection from the dead is a blessing for us all. It has changed the whole course of our lives. The good news that we have been given new life amidst death is more important now than ever. Consider talking about the importance of resurrection hope for Christians (hope for life beyond death), as we are seeing the world devastated by this deadly pandemic. And consider also talking about the way the gospel enables us to claim life in the here and now, even when we are afraid. As always, be sensitive to the specific circumstances of your congregation and particularly how this pandemic is affecting them. Make sure any concrete commitments or actions you suggest are things people can do safely and healthily during social distancing.



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