

## Welcome

- If you're visiting with us today, welcome. If we haven't met. I'm Dominic. I'm one of the Pastor/Elders here.
- We're so glad you're with us today.

## Offering

- This is part of **how we worship** God / An **act of worship** to God.
- If you're visiting with us, please **don't feel obligated to give**.
- **You're our guest**. Just sit back and **receive** today.

## Pray for offering

- Pray for offering and morning

## In the gospel of Luke chapter 24 it says:

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" (Luke 24:1-6)

Today, there are hundreds of millions of people gathering all over the world to celebrate, what we believe to be the greatest event that ever took place in all of history. And many of the people who gather today — millions do it at the risk of losing their lives because of their faith and worship of this risen Jesus. And they know the risk! And STILL THEY gather today!

And they gather, like us, because we have been confronted with the reality of a living Christ. We have been confronted with the reality that Jesus Christ didn't just die on a cross like biblical and secular history tells us. But Jesus ALSO ROSE from the dead.

- And the evidence is undeniable.
- There is a staggering amount of first-century testimony from people who claimed to have seen the risen Christ -- too much testimony, in fact, for it to have been hallucination, or some fabricated story.
- The former investigative journalist, Lee Strobel says in his book, "The Case for Christ" that "If you were to call each one of the witnesses to a court of law to be cross-examined for just fifteen minutes, and you went around the clock without a break, it would take you from breakfast on Monday until dinner on Friday to hear them all. After listening to 129 straight hours of eyewitness testimony, who could possibly walk away unconvinced?"
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- The evidence is undeniable. The tomb is empty. I've been to the tomb where they buried Jesus, I've walked inside. There is no body there.
- He rose from the dead.
- But for the Christian, it's not just the **evidence** that this happened. It's what this means for us.
- It's not just some intellectual argument that has been won by those in favor of Jesus. If that was the case, every church in the world would be packed with followers of Jesus and nobody would be killing us for our faith.
- It's not just some head thing. Our lives have forever been changed by this Jesus.
- And he has changed everything for us.
- For those who don't know Jesus, this life is it. This is as good as it will ever get.
- And if Jesus is not risen from the dead, then this life is all there is. There is no hope after the grave.
- But, if Jesus IS risen from the dead, then we have **hope** not just in this life, but in life after death.
- If Jesus is risen, then death isn't the end.
- Did you know that the Bible calls death an foe?
- Did you know that death was not the the original plan for humanity? The Bible says that death is an enemy.
- And if you've ever watched someone die, you get this right?
  - We had a little baby boy die three years ago after just a day of being with us. And we felt the enemy of death.
  - When I was 12, my best friend committed suicide, and it felt like death came and waged war on Jake Rose.
  - When my daughter was just 8, her best friend died from cancer after battling it for three years. And we felt the pain of the enemy called "death".
- See, death is an enemy because death was never God's plan for humanity.
- God's plan for humanity was LIFE.
- God spoke the world, and all that dwells in it, into existence for the purpose of life, not death.
- But when mankind sinned, death entered the world.
- 
- But when Christ died on that cross and then rose from the dead, He **defeated** death.
- **And so now, does does not get to have the final word.**
  - Death, the very thing that seems so final in an of itself, does not have to get the final word.
  - Jesus gets the final word because Jesus beat death.
- The bible says to death,
- "Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55)

- **When Jesus rose from the dead, it was an assault on the great enemy of death.** And in Jesus, the sting of death has been removed. The power of death has been taken away. **“Death has been swallowed up in the victory Jesus”**
- In the gospel of John, we see Jesus come in contact with death as a friend of his dies from a sickness.
- His friend’s name was Lazarus, and the Bible tells us that Jesus loved this man and his family.
- When Lazarus got sick his two sisters called for Jesus to come and help, believing that he could heal him. But instead of coming right away, Jesus waited. And by the time he arrived, Lazarus had already been dead for four days, and it seemed like all hope was gone.
- And if you’re hope is in this life only, then yes all hope is gone. But what if you’re hope is in someone who is life in of themselves?
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- When Jesus finally arrived at the grave site, Lazarus’ sister Martha came and greeted Jesus and told him, “Jesus, if you had been here, then Lazarus would have never died. You could have healed him Jesus.”
- But Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”
- Martha replies by saying, “Yeah, yeah I know Lord. I know that he’ll rise on the last day at the final resurrection.”
- But Jesus responds to her and says, “Martha, **I am the resurrection** and the life. The one who believes in me, even if they die, they will live.”
- And then Jesus tell the people to roll away the stone from the tomb.
- And they’re like, “Lord, he’s been dead four days... he’s gonna smell.”
- Jesus: “Don’t you want to see the glory of God?”
- People: “Alright”
- And they roll away the stone.
- And Jesus yells to the dead man in the tomb, “Lazarus! Come out!”
- And this once, dead man, walks out of the tomb, grave clothes still wrapped around him.
- **In a place where all anyone could see was death, Jesus came in and brought life.**
- **In a place where there was only weeping and sorrow, Jesus came in and brought joy and laughter.**
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- **And that’s the story of Easter too. I mean** when Friday hit, all anyone saw was their beloved messiah hanging on a tree.
- All they saw was darkness, and they were blinded by their sorrow because they didn’t realize that Sunday really would come just like Jesus had told them it would.
- Over and over again in the gospels, Jesus told his followers, told the multitudes, even the religious leaders that he would be crucified, AND that he would RISE again.

- And he didn't just say THAT he would rise. He said WHEN he would rise. He told them, on the the third I will rise again.
- Jesus knew that Friday would come. Jesus knew he would be crucified. But Jesus also knew that Sunday would come.
- And we have to live in the reality of not just Friday. But Sunday too.
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- Jesus knew that Lazarus' sickness would lead to death. But the power of death is no thing Jesus. And so when Jesus says, "I wanna reverse death." He reverses death.
- Jesus steps into this family's situation where all they could see was death and sorrow, and pain, and hopelessness, He speaks the life into it.
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- **And this is what he does.**
- In the Kingdom of God, death, sorrow, devastation, do not get the final word. Friday does not get the final word in the Kingdom of God.
- In the Kingdom of God Jesus gets the final word. In the Kingdom of God the death of Friday is not the end. Because is the Kingdom of God, there is a Sunday!
- Friday said seemed like the end for many because the people didn't get it! They didn't understand that when Jesus said that HE WAS the resurrection and the life that that's what he meant. That HE WAS LIFE.
- They didn't know that when he said that NO man could take his life away, but He chooses if and when he will lay it down, that he really meant it. Nobody tells Jesus what to do."
- Jesus hold the keys to death.
- They didn't get it that when Jesus said that he would be crucified BUT would rise again on the third day that that's what he really meant, because who the heck predicts and then pulls off their own death and resurrection. It's understandable that they didn't get it.
- And so for the them Friday was the end.
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- But in the Kingdom of God the death of Friday is NOT the end because in the Kingdom of God, Sunday always comes.
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- These people at the tomb of Lazarus that day, thought that it was the end — and of course they did. The DUDE was dead! But what it seems like the end for us, is often just the beginning, as far as God is concerned.
- What seems like death, is often just the beginning of life when it comes to the Kingdom of God. Because **Jesus tells dead things to wake up.**
- Not just sleeping things. Anybody can wake a sleeping person up. Our 5 year is SUPER good at this. But ain't nobody wake dead people up.
- **Anybody can wake up things that are just tired or worn out. But only Jesus makes dead things alive.**
- Those things that you think are dead. Jesus talks to those things like they're just sleeping, and tells them, "Wake Up!"
- When Jesus rose on that Sunday he rose with **every thing good you could will ever need.**

- In Jesus every good thing is found. In him all things are made alive. Jesus said, “**I AM the resurrection and THE LIFE. I am LIFE.**”
- In Jesus is LIFE.
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- That means then that for those who trust in Jesus that when you think hope is lost and dead. That it is not.
- **HOPE is not dead in Jesus. Because Jesus is alive, HOPE is alive.**
- For those of you who feel like **joy** has been robbed from you and is gone forever. It is not gone. **JOY is dead. To Jesus, it's just sleeping.**
- When it feels like the darkness has overtaken you, and that it has won. It hasn't won. Jesus wins. Joy is not gone. Joy is dead. For those who have put their trust in Jesus, Joy is alive.
- **Love** is not dead. God IS LOVE. And God is not dead. The deepest, strongest, steadiest, most satisfying love any human could ever experience is found in the one who demonstrated his love in giving his life for us, and then rising from the dead in victory.
- **LOVE is not dead. It is alive and found in Jesus.**
- **Peace. That peace that feels like a long lost friend. It's not dead. It is alive in Jesus. Jesus said, “PEACE is what I give to you. PEACE is what I leave with you.”** Not as the world gives peace.” Jesus doesn't give peace like the world gives peace. The world CAN'T give peace. You know that. I know that. Jesus is the PRINCE of peace.
- **Rest** is not gone. Rest is right here.
- **Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who weary and burdened, and I will give you Rest.** Rest is not dead. It is alive in Jesus.
- Healing is not unattainable. Healing is not a lost cause.
- **HEALING is not dead. It is alive in Jesus.**
- The Bible says that by the stripes of Jesus we are healed. Oh, how he wants to heal you today. Bring your **sickness**. Bring your **brokenness**. Bring your **heartache**. Bring your **depression**. Bring your **anxiety**. Bring your broken **marriages**. Bring your broken friendships. Bring your broken heart.
- **Bring your death. And let Jesus breathe his life into you.**
- **Bring your Fridays, and let Jesus bring you to his Sunday.**
- You don't have to stay there in your death. And you don't have to stay in the tomb. Jesus says to you like he said to Lazarus, “Child, Come out!” Come out of the grave.
- And Christian take off those grave clothes. Stop walking around like you're dead! Stop living like you're still in bondage to the sin that Jesus broke the power of. You're FREE! LIVE LIKE IT!
- You don't have to stay in your death.
- And you don't have to live in the tension between life and death either.

- **We just celebrated, as church, “Good Friday”.** It’s the Friday before Easter. It’s the day that Jesus was crucified.
- And we gathered on Friday and remembered what our savior did there and WHY he did it.
- **But then there was yesterday. Then there was Saturday.**
- After Jesus died, his followers went home, most of them having no idea if Jesus would really do what he said he would, in rising from the dead, and so when they woke the next morning, on Saturday, they woke, living in this tension between Friday and Sunday.
- And right now some of you are stuck in that same tension and you’re asking yourself like the disciples must have, “Is Jesus really gonna come through? Is he really going to rise like he said he would? Is he really going to DO what he said he would do? Can I actually bank on his promises?
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- Some of you live continually in this place, in the tension of Saturday, not knowing if Sunday will ever come. Well, let me tell you. Sunday ALREADY came guys. Sunday came.
- And it came in POWER. And it came in VICTORY!
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- When Jesus rose from the dead HE ROSE IN VICTORY OVER DEATH.
- I wasn’t there, so I don’t know, but I bet when Jesus rose from the dead, He said, “HEY DEATH! Where is your victory. Death, where is your sting? For you have been swallowed up in Victory.”
- **The victory of Sunday came guys.** You do not have to live in that tension anymore. You do not have to wonder if the glory of Sunday will come or not, and you certainly do not need to live in the sorrow of Friday.
- **Everything that we thought was dead on Friday, is made alive in Jesus on Sunday.**
- We do not have to live in the tension of Saturday wondering if he’ll do what he said he would.
  - He already did it! We don’t have to wonder if God **can** make things alive. Jesus rose from the dead, trampling every enemy under his feet, including the enemy of death.
  - **It is what He does. He makes dead things alive.**
- We don’t have to wonder if the living victory of Sunday will ever come. It came. Our King is alive. Our King is alive. Our king is alive. And he’s risen from the dead.
- **Our king is alive, and in his life he brings every dead thing to life.**
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- I said a minute ago, that anyone can make tired worn out things wake up, but only Jesus makes dead things come to life.
- Some of you came in here this morning, and you don’t even realize it but you need to be alive, because YOU’RE ACTUALLY DEAD.
- I’m not talking physically, obviously. I’m talking spiritually.
- We are all born spiritually dead because of a spiritual disease called sin.
- And there is no amount of good works that can be done to undo the disease. It’s terminal.
- And apart from Jesus, if we die in our sins, the Bible says that we will perish in a lake of fire.

- But God loved the world so much, that He gave his only son, that whoever believes in Him WOULD NOT perish, but have eternal life.”
- That fire wasn’t intended for you. You weren’t intended to perish. You were intended to live forever with your created.
- God’s plan for you is life. Not just physically. But spiritually. And not just in this life, but in the one to come as well.
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- I mean, if we hope in this life only, then yea you’re right, there’s not too much to be excited about.
- If we hope in this life only, then, we are like the apostle Paul said, “To be pitied among all people.”
- But we DON’T hope in this life only. For the one who trust in Jesus, there is hope beyond this life — there is hope beyond the grave for those who trust in Jesus.
- That’s why I can stand here today and smile about my 8 year olds who die from cancer or 1 day olds who die from terminal birth defects — because for them, death was not the end. For them, there was not just hope in this life only. There was hope in the life to come as well.
- If you’re only hope today, is in this life and in what can be found in this world, then you are missing out my friend.
- But there is good news here. There is good news to be found in Jesus. And there is LIFE to be found in Jesus.
- And that’s what Easter is.
- We call Friday “Good” Friday because Friday was only part of the story. Without Sunday, then Friday is just full of death. Without Sunday, then Jesus isn’t really who he says he is.
- But Jesus rising from the dead means everything he did and said was for real.
- **Because Jesus not only said he would die. But that he would rise again on the third day.**
  - It’s one thing to predict your own death. But it is quite another to predict AND PULL OFF your own death resurrection, in the timeline that you said it would happen.
  - **Jesus was God in human flesh.**
- Jesus rising from dead says that everything that He said he was.
- **Jesus rising from the dead authenticates everything Jesus did and said.**
- There is no in between here. Either Jesus is some crazy lunatic magician, who some how predicted and pulled off his own death and resurrection (impossible by the way), or he is the savior of the world like he said he was.
- Jesus rising from the dead means that he is who he says.
- And what Jesus said about Himself is that he is the way the truth and the life. **Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. And nobody comes to the Father, except through me.” (John 14:6)**
- Listen to me today. I don’t know why you think you’re here today. But it’s not just because someone invited you, or because you heard there was free everything bunt cupcakes.



- **You're here because God wanted you to be hear to hear the good news about who He is.**
- You may not know this, but you have a father in heaven, who has known you since you were in your mother's womb.
- He knows the hairs on your head. He knows every thought that you think before you think it. He sees every tear that you cry.
- **And the thoughts toward you outnumber the sand every sea shore.**
- And God demonstrated his love for us, in that while we were dead in our sin, He sent Jesus to die for us, to pay the penalty for our sin, so that our sin could be dealt with.
- I said earlier that we were all born with terminal spiritual disease called sin, and that there was no cure. Well, that was only half true. There IS ONE cure.
- The reason Jesus died on the cross was to pay the price for our sin. And when we put our trust in him for for the forgiveness of our sins, the Bible says that we become as white as snow, and at that moment we are made alive, spiritually speaking and brought into relationship with God.
- I know you feel alive today, but apart from Jesus there IS no life.
- You've been searching for the living among the dead. But just like that angel said to those women that day, "You won't find the living there."
- You're only going to find a shadow of life in those places.
- Wealth
- Status? Respect? Honor?
- Success or Power or Sacrifice
- Giving yourself to others, or sacrificing your desires for the sake of others
- You could spend your whole life searching for life, and as long and as hard as you search, you will ONLY ever find a faint shadow of what God really intended for you to find in Him.
- And you will get to the end of your life, and end up joining in with King Solomon in saying, "Vanity of Vanities. It's all vanity. It is all grasping for wind."
- Have you every tried to grasp the wind? You can't you can't it.
- And that what the pleasures of this life are. They aren't the real thing. They're just a shadow.
- Everything pleasure in this life is just a shadow of the real thing.
- The love that you know in this life. It's just a taste of the love that God intended for you to experience in relationship with him.
- The satisfaction that comes from tasting a good meal, or completing your latest project, or getting rightfully rewarded for all your hard work, is just a taste of the satisfaction that God intended for you to find in the endless eternal well that is God.
- The greatest pleasures of this life will never compare to the wealth of knowing Him.
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- And you will not find life in spirituality or religion or either.
  - Buddhism
  - Hindu
  - New Age



- Yoga and Meditation practice
- Islam
- All of it is all just a shadow of the real thing.
- People seeking after the ALMIGHTY ONE. The Creator. Allah. The supreme LIGHT. GOD.
- **But Jesus said, “I am the light. I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life.** And no one comes to the Almighty - the Creator - God - in Arabic, “Allah” . Nobody comes to him, except through Jesus.
- And when Jesus said this, it wasn’t an invitation from Jesus to religion. This was an invitation to God. This wasn’t an invitation to join a church. This was an invitation to come into relationship with God.
- And **There is no way to the God, except through Jesus.**
- You may find some good stuff in some other places. You may find some helpful practices, and you might find some glimmers of light. But that’s all they are is glimmers. They are all just a reflection of the real thing.
- But the actual LIGHT. The actual source is Jesus.
- So stop trying to find some other way. Jesus IS the way.
- Life is found in Him.

One of the first songs I ever wrote, was a song that I needed to sing back to myself. The chorus said, and I would say to you...

- Why do you spend your money then, on what is not bread?
- Why do you spend you wages on what cannot satisfy?
- 
- Your Father in Heaven says to you today:
- **“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” - GOD**
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- On that Sunday morning, when those women came to the tomb of Jesus, they had no idea, but they were looking for the living among the dead. And the angel said to them, **"Why do seek the living among the dead?" Jesus is alive.**
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- You may not even realize it this morning, but you’ve **seeking the living among the dead.**
- **You are looking for life in that which can never give you life.**
- **Why do you spend your money on what is not bread? Why do spend your wages on what cannot satisfy.**
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- The one who you’re looking for is Jesus. Jesus rose just like he said he would.
- You don’t go to a cemetery to find living people. All you will find there is death.
- And you don’t go to the world to give you life. All you’ll find there is a grasping for the wind. You go to Jesus to find life.
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- So you know what these women did? **They left the cemetery.** They left the place of death because there was nothing there for them.
- They left the tomb as they're running to tell their friends what had happened, the risen Christ meets them on the road, and it says in **Matthew 28 that they grabbed ahold of his feet and began to worship him.**
- These women fled the place of death, and instead had a life changing experience with the living Christ.
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- So what are you going to do? You going to stay at the place of death.
- **Are you going to stay at the cemetery,** looking for the living among the dead, or you going to leave that place of death and run to Jesus and fall at his feet and worship him?
- **Are you going to stay in the tomb,** spiritually dead, or are you going to hear the voice of Jesus saying to you, "Child, come out!" Come out of the grave. Come out of the dark, and take off those grave clothes and find in Jesus life, and love and peace, and healing, and wholeness, and rest.
- Are you going to stay gathered around the cross on Friday after everything and everyone is dead and darkness has fallen over the land?
- Or are you going to step into Sunday where there is hope, and light, and joy, and life.
- 
- Jesus is the resurrection and the life friends. And in him is life.
- Jesus is alive. That's a fact. He's alive and He's not going anywhere.
- **So the question is, what will you do with Him? What are you going to do with the risen Jesus?**
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- **Today I'm begging you, leave the place of death. There is nothing there for you. And come to Jesus.**
- 
- **Invitation**

### **Pray:**

- *God's great love*
- *Thank Jesus for dying for sin.*
- *Acknowledge that you're rising from the dead proves that you really are the son of God. You really are the savior of the world.*
- *Some here, who don't know you yet — haven't moved from Friday to Sunday. Haven't moved from spiritual death to life — haven't left the grave to come and follow you and receive life everlasting. I would ask that you would draw them to yourself. That you'd say to them, "Come out!" today.*
- I want to give some people here today, an opportunity to respond to all of this because today is the day of salvation. There may no be a tomorrow. Today you choose. So today I'm going to give you a chance to respond to God.

- God saw the problem of our sin, and he *responded* in love, by sending Jesus.
  - Jesus *responded* by giving his life. And today, I want to invite you to respond to Him.
  - And just like Jesus gave his life publicly, I'm gonna ask you to respond publicly. In a minute if you want to respond to Jesus, I'm gonna ask you to stand up.
  - And here's why I'm gonna ask you to stand up. There is something powerful about making a physical move. Like when you choose go somewhere, and you physically step onto a train or an airplane. Or choose slip a ring on your finger saying I'm marrying you. You're saying, "I am choosing to do this, and I'm illustrating my choosing, by taking this action."
  - So today, in just a minute, I'm gonna ask you to take the action of physically standing up.
1. I'm a sinner. I need a savior. I believe Jesus died so that my sins could be forgiven and so that I could be made alive. And I want to put my trust in Him today.
    - I'm gonna ask you to stand up in a minute, and this will be your first step in following Jesus.
  2. I have believed, and I have received, and I once followed Jesus, but I've been wandering, distracted, preoccupied, and if you were to be honest with yourself, you know you're not following Jesus. You've been still walking around in those grave clothes hanging out among the tombs. But today Jesus is calling you to be free from that. Today I'm gonna ask you to stand.

**So right now, while the band is just kind of playing some music, we're just gonna take a couple of minutes, and if you want to follow Jesus, weather it's for the first time, or you're coming back to Him, you stand up.**

*Wait... No sin too big / Don't let pride keep you seated / In your surrender there is freedom / God loves you.*

Pray in own words. It's good to say it out loud. You can just whisper if you want. In your own words just tell him: Jesus, save me. I believe in you. I receive you into my life.

If you're sitting down around one of these brothers or sisters, maybe just stand up. Don't be creepy, but maybe just give them a little side hug.

"Welcome to the family of God / Welcome back."

Let's all stand together.

**We're going to worship!**

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1 Cor. 15:

But each in his own order:† Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end,† when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father,† when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power.† 25 For he must reign† until he puts all his enemies under his feet.† 26 The last enemy to be abolished is death.† 27 For God has put everything under his feet.†† Now when it says “everything” is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under him is the exception. 28 When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son† himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.†

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope  
(1 Peter 1:3)

I know that my Saviour lives,  
and at the end  
he will stand on this earth.  
My flesh may be destroyed,  
yet from this body  
I will see God.  
(Job 19:25-26)

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**ARTICLE:**

It's a question asked and answered each Easter in news reports, television documentaries and personal conversations. This year, two Southern Baptists who train others to defend the faith have offered their thoughts on the best way to answer.

Rob Phillips, who leads apologetics for the Missouri Baptist Convention, pointed to the "minimal facts argument," which defends the resurrection using only evidence "considered virtually undeniable," even by skeptics. Stephen Wellum, a theology professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said evidence for the resurrection always must be coupled with an explanation of the resurrection's significance within the Christian worldview.

Phillips told Baptist Press the minimal facts argument is "a compelling case for the resurrection" in the 21st century because "there appears to be such a high level of skepticism today about the Bible in general and about its recorded miracles in particular."

Citing Liberty University apologist Gary Habermas, Phillips noted two requirements for a "minimal fact": "First, each fact must be confirmed by several strong and independent arguments, typically 10 or more historical confirmations. Second, the vast majority of scholars -- even liberal Christian scholars, non-Christian scholars and atheists -- must recognize the occurrence's historical nature."

Phillips identified six such "minimal facts" that support a belief in Christ rising from the dead bodily:

- "Jesus died by crucifixion;
- "Very soon after His death, His followers had real experiences that they thought were actual appearances of the risen Jesus;
- "Their lives were transformed as a result, even to the point of being willing to die specifically for their faith in the resurrection message;
- "These things were taught very early, soon after the crucifixion;
- "James, Jesus' unbelieving brother, became a Christian due to his own experience with whom he believed to be the resurrected Christ;
- "The Christian persecutor Paul ... became a believer after a similar experience."

Phillips concluded, "These 'minimal facts' come not only from multiple eyewitnesses as recorded in Scripture, but from numerous non-biblical sources -- even sources hostile to Christianity. While there is overwhelming evidence to support these historic events, our goal as followers of Jesus is not necessarily to win a debate or to get in the last word.

"Rather, it is to offer a winsome testimony of the resurrected Christ with whom we have an unbreakable relationship, and to encourage our listeners to trust Him for everlasting life," Phillips said in written comments.

Houston Baptist University apologetics professor Lee Strobel explained in his book "The Case for Christ" why the facts Phillips cited are virtually indisputable. In February, Strobel presented some of his research for an HBU apologetics simulcast.

In "The Case for Christ," Strobel reviewed the medical evidence for Jesus' death on the cross with physician and research scientist Alexander Metherell, who concluded the idea that Jesus didn't actually die on the cross is "a fanciful theory without any possible basis in fact." Strobel also noted a "staggering" amount of first-century testimony from people who claimed to have seen the risen Christ -- too much testimony for it to have been hallucination.

"If you were to call each one of the witnesses to a court of law to be cross-examined for just fifteen minutes," Strobel wrote, "and you went around the clock without a break, it would take you from breakfast on Monday until dinner on Friday to hear them all. After listening to 129 straight hours of eyewitness testimony, who could possibly walk away unconvinced?"

After also noting circumstantial evidence for the resurrection and evidence that Christ's tomb was empty on Easter morning, Strobel concluded Jesus truly did rise from the dead. "If my conclusion in the case for Christ is correct," he wrote in the book, "your future and your eternity hinge on how you respond to Christ."

Wellum, professor of Christian theology at Southern, said "the evidence for the resurrection is well known and it consists of three interlocking pieces: 1) the fact of the empty tomb, 2) the resurrection appearances of Christ and 3) the transformation of the disciples and the establishment of the church. This data is interlocking since one piece of the data without the others would not provide a good case."

However, Wellum told BP in written comments, "it is not the mere fact of the resurrection alone that is important but the meaning."

"The skeptic can still always admit that Christ may have been risen from the dead without thinking that His resurrection has universal significance," Wellum said. "Maybe Christ's resurrection is one of those strange events that occur from time to time in history. After all, given the non-Christian's worldview, they will look at even the 'fact' of the resurrection within their overall worldview."

Within the Christian worldview, Wellum said, Christ's resurrection "demonstrates at least three truths":

-- "By Christ's death and resurrection, death has been destroyed because as the Lord and Messiah, He has come to reverse the effects of sin, death and destruction (e.g., [Hebrews 2:14-18](#))."

-- "Christ's resurrection demonstrates that salvation has been accomplished ... that sin[']s penalty] has been paid and thus the power of death has been broken."

-- "Christ's resurrection demonstrates that judgment has come and will come to this world ([Acts 17:31](#)). Because of the resurrection, all humanity will be judged by Jesus Christ."

Christians must show that their explanation of the resurrection makes more sense than alternative explanations, Wellum said.

"The significance of the resurrection of Jesus cannot be properly understood as simply an isolated phenomenon of brute power, or a freak accident of nature which belongs to Ripley's Believe It or Not. The resurrection is not a strange or isolated event which has no intelligible links to the past and no relationship to the future," Wellum said.

"Rather, the significance of the resurrection and the context in which to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus is the Old Testament Scriptures," he said. "For Jesus' Messianic death and resurrection is the fulfillment of the plan of God to bring about both redemption and judgment. It is not an accident of nature, but the result of God's plan, purposes and intention."

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Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7 and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea. Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you



whatever you ask.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” **44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” **(John 11)**

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## **WOMAN AT WELL**

- In the gospel of John, chapter 4, Jesus meets this woman at the well in the city of Samaria, a city and a people that most Jews avoided at all costs. But Jesus goes there, intentionally.
- And he's there at a well. It's the middle of the day, and this woman is there drawing water, by herself.
  - Now in first century Israel, people didn't go to the well by themselves, and they certainly didn't go in the middle of the day when it was blazing hot.
- But this wasn't just any woman. This woman was like the talk of the town.
- In a time when it was an absolute disgrace to be divorced, this woman had been divorced and remarried 5 times.
- In a time when it was not culturally acceptable to live with someone who you weren't married to, this woman was now, after 5 marriages, living with her boyfriend.
- And in a culture when Jews didn't speak with Samaritans, and men rarely had conversations with women, Jesus, this Jewish man, strikes up a conversation, with this Samaritan woman.

- And he asked her to get him some water, putting himself in need of this woman — showing her respect and honor as he did so.
- And then he tells her:
- “If you only knew the gift God has for you, and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water... Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well[f] of water springing up in him for eternal life.”
- This woman had been searching her whole life for something to satisfy her desire. She was created for love, and so she looked for it in men. 5 husbands!
  - That’s 5 engagements. 5 times you introduce a new one to your family. 5 dowries. 5 weddings. 5 times when she thought, “Ok, this time it’s going to be different.” But it was never any different. She would never find what she was looking for.
  - And we will never find what we are looking for until we come to Jesus.
- **Jesus sees you today. And he sees you continually coming every day, every hour to draw from a well of water that will, can never satisfy you.**
- And he says to you, like he did to the woman at the well, “If you only knew the gift God has for you, you would just ask me, and I would give you LIVING WATER.”
- You’re looking for life, and you should be! You were meant to experience life. You were meant to experience the abundant life. You SHOULD be looking for life. But you’re looking for it in a place where you will only find death.
- Why do you seek the living among the dead?
- Jesus is alive and offering you life today.

Jesus is risen from the dead. And if Jesus is risen, then we not only do we have hope offered to us that is beyond what this world can offer. But we also have LIFE offered to us that is beyond what this world can offer.

- If Jesus is risen from the dead, then there is **ABUNDANT LIFE** waiting for us.

***Word to Christians about abundant life and not walking in it.***

***Word to non believers about abundant life that is found in Jesus.***

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