

Easter 2024 at Calvary Vista Risen - Mark 16

Good morning and Happy Resurrection Day!

A)Glorious thing to think about that there are millions/ millions of Christians all over the world

B)Gathering today to celebrate the fact that the Tomb is empty and Jesus HAS RISEN.....

There was a woman who discovered one morning that her German shepherd - had jumped the fence into her neighbor's yard - **they were not home.**

A)She quickly ran over and opened to gate to her neighbors yard only to find that her dog was shaking the life out of her neighbor's **PET rabbit.**

Now Her family did not get along well with these neighbors, so she knew this was going to be a disaster.

She yelled at the dog to drop the rabbit/which he did!

Seeing the rabbit was dead – she panicked – she grabbed the rabbit and ran into her house

- gave it a bath,
- blew dried it to its original fluffiness,
- combed it until the rabbit looked like a rabbit again,

Then she snuck into the neighbor's yard, and put the rabbit back into its cage.

About 3 hours later she hears her neighbor screaming – she ran over – what is wrong?

"Our rabbit! Our rabbit!"

"He died a few days ago. We buried him, and now he's back!"

When Someone or something is dead and Buried – You expect it to stay Dead!

A)On that first Easter morning - No one expected Jesus to RISE from the dead.

B)Not the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb, Worried disciples steal the body!

1)not the Disciples - hiding out in fear and depressed

C)And Not the women who came to the tomb that morning

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Now why were they bringing spices to anoint ..when Joseph and Nicodemus already anointed the body 3 days prior ?

The men didn't do it right? - Right ladies!!

2 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

3 And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?"

Catch that- they were not expecting an empty tomb, They were hoping someone might be there to roll away the stone -so they could anoint the **dead body of Jesus!**

4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man **Angel** clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But 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.** 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." 8 So 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.

Luke's gospel tells us that when they reached the Disciples and told them the news - tomb empty....

their words seemed to **them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.** Disciples didn't believe at first

See - When someone dies you don't expect them to come back from the dead!

A)Especially the way Jesus died - brutally beaten -

B)You would never expect anyone to come back from that - especially after 3 days!

C)The followers of Jesus spent three years of their lives following him - given to him -

1)invested in the mission.

D)Three years **BIG HOPES - BIG DREAMS** - that were completely dashed on Friday when he died.

E)The Disciples found themselves perplexed - distraught wondering - now what?

1)What is next ?

Imagine how different their lives would have been if Jesus didn't rise from the dead!

A)Paul the Apostle gives us a glimpse of what life would have been like if Jesus didn't rise....

If Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. ¹⁵ And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. ¹⁶ And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. ¹⁸ In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! ¹⁹ And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. 1 Corinthians 15:14-19 NLT

Now in this statement Paul mentions 4 things that would be true of us if Jesus didn't rise.

#1 Our faith would be empty and useless.

#2 There is no forgiveness of sins.

#3 There is no hope of heaven

#4 We are to be pitied more than anyone else in the world.

A)Today I want to Quickly consider each one of these points

B)But then consider the flip side of those statements

C)if Jesus has risen from the dead what does that mean for every one of us here.

So if Jesus did not rise that means:

A)#1 Your faith is useless, empty and pointless!

B)It means these disciples had wasted 3 years of their lives - following Jesus

C)His claims of eternal life, being the messiah - the only way to God NOT TRUE!!!

D)It means our faith is empty! No weight - no merit!

Everyone believes in Something - Religion - Philosophy Self - Everyone believes in something

A)But does your believe system have merit - weight

B)An Atheist was complaining – We don't have any holidays – the Christians have **Christmas and Easter**

1)Jewish people have Hanukah

C)We don't have a holiday – His Friend said – sure you do - it is tomorrow April 1st – April fool's day

1)**The Fool has said in his heart ...no God**

D)But if Jesus did not rise who is the REAL fool ?
WE ARE! - Our Faith is empty! Means nothing

#2 If Christ did not Rise again from the dead – There is no forgiveness of sins!

A)Means we are still guilty of sin.

B)The Bible says – All men have sinned fallen short of the glory of God – **Sin = to miss the mark**

1)missed the mark of God's standard

C)Been said the reason why we **feel guilty** is because we are guilty - all broken God's laws

D)Sin causes us to be separated from God /- feelings of guilt and shame.

One of the things that makes Christianity different and unique from every other faith is THIS:

A)Christianity is the only faith OFFERS forgiveness of sins

B)The Bible says because of what Jesus did - you can experience your sins being forgiven!

1)Freedom from guilt and shame

C)But if Jesus didn't rise from the dead - there is no forgiveness of sins - we are still guilty

1)Still separated from God. - No life - no relationship

#3 If Christ did not rise again from the dead – there is no Hope of heaven!

A)That means when a person dies – They just perish in their sin – They are lost – they go to hell.

B)Today We sang praise songs – Forget it – Funeral march

C)Like one of the country western songs –All Bad

D)My girl broke my heart – my dog died and my MY truck broke down

1)Life STINKS

E)If Christ did not rise - that is our song! Always the BLUES!

1)NOTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TOO!

#4 If Christ did not rise again then we are to be the most pitied people in all of the world

A)Those poor foolish Christians – basing their whole lives on a myth – on a pipe dream. - SO SAD

B)Have you ever met someone who is basing their whole life on some dream **that is never going to happen ?**

C)**American Idol – some of these contestants** – who really think they have talent and they can sing. -

D)They get up there all serious and start to sing and it is horrible - FUNNY

But it is also REALLY Sad – especially when they get so upset that they didn't make it –like REALLY?

A)Makes you wonder – don't they have someone in their lives who can speak truth –

B)that is a dream is never going to happen -You can't sing!!!

C)They don't know that - they are delusional they think they have talent that they don't have

That would be us – the world would pity us – they would look at us in a pathetic way.

A)You poor silly Christians are pathetic – you are wasting your lives - **for a hope that doesn't EXIST**

B)So if Jesus didn't rise from the dead - Our faith is pointless - There is no forgiveness of Sins

1)There is no hope of heaven - and we are silly and pathetic people for believing such a stupid thing!

C)But listen to me folks - The Tomb is empty!

1)Jesus has risen from the dead.

D)**SO WE HAVE TO FLIP THIS:**

Faith occurs when the unexplainable and the unimaginable ARE confronted by the undeniable.

A)After watching Jesus die the way he did on Friday - the disciples couldn't **imagine** him alive again.

B)They couldn't begin to explain how that would even be possible! - No way.

C)But then they saw him - He appeared to them over a period of 40 days - they ate with him

1)They touched him - they talked with him.

D)It was Undeniable - Jesus Risen from the dead was right in front of them!

1)500 people saw him at one time!

All the evidence that has been examined points to THE VALIDITY OF THE RESURRECTION

A)SO before we go today - I want to talk about what the reality of the resurrection means to:

B)Those of us who are believers today:

1)Those here who are not -

C)Start with those of us who are believers

Because the tomb is empty - He is Risen –

A)**Your Faith is Rock Solid!**

B)The evidence for the empty tomb is Rock Solid

C)You know one thing that saddens me is when people reject Jesus - never examine the evidence

D)When I was growing up - my Mom made this desert that she called a Cherry Dump cake.

My whole life I never tried it - Sounded gross!

A)**Dump and Cake** - don't belong together in the same sentence..

B)Dump just sounded like random ingredients

C)Plus when she would pull it out of the oven -it just looked kind of gross -

D)So My whole life growing up when my mom made it I never tried it. - **NOT FOR ME**

Well after my wife Denise and I got married - Denise asked my mom for a new dessert recipe

A)She wanted to try something new. Well my mom - gave her this Cherry Dump cake recipe? Spite me?

B)I remember the day - coming home from work - walking in the front door of our house/ glorious smell

C)What is that? Smells Delicious - Denise said I made a surprise for dessert

1)Now Denise didn't know I never ate it growing up

So After dinner - Denise brings out this dish- Now she called it a Cherry Cobbler - I love Cobbler

A)She piled Vanilla ice cream on top - so I really couldn't see what it looked like

B)I had no idea it was the dish my mom made for yrs

C)I took my first Bite - It was literally desert heaven!

1)Incredible -

D)It quickly became my favorite dessert! To this day- it still is! - **Having it today!!! - Can't wait!!!**

A few days later - I was talking to my mom and said- Denise made the most amazing dessert - Cherry....

A)My mom says- that is the Dump Cake I made your whole life that you never even tried it!!!

B)Why did you call it a dump cake! - Cobbler

C)In the same way that I had that preconceived idea about that dessert

D)People do the same with Jesus - Never give him a chance - bad experience with the church

1)With Christians

E)The Bible invites us to "Taste and see that the Lord is good!"

F)Some people never taste - never examine

There are some famous skeptics who became followers of Jesus - **after considering - the evidence of the Resurrection!**

A)Consider James the half-brother of Jesus!

B)During the earthly ministry of Jesus - James was not a believer - skeptic

C)Thought his **older brother was nuts** - tried to have him institutionalized.

D)But after Jesus died on the cross and rose again from the dead - James became a Fanatic for Jesus

James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

E)Bondservant = Willing servant - and he called his older brother **his Lord!**

Saul of Tarsus: In the first century - Saul was the **#1 enemy of the Jesus and his followers.**

A)After encountering Jesus risen from the dead he becomes the **#1 Spokesman for Christ**

B)After his conversion he changed his name to Paul - Paul a bondservant of Jesus Christ -

C)Former skeptic Dr. Simon Greenleaf who was the Royal Professor of Law at Harvard University.

1)Thought the resurrection was a Hoax until he examined the evidence.

Greenleaf concluded "according to the jurisdiction of legal evidence the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the best supported event in all of history!"

Former atheist and legal investigative Journalist who earned his law degree from Yale University - Lee Strobel

"The historical evidence for the resurrection convinced me Jesus is the Son of God. But if you ask me today why I believe, it's because I've known Jesus personally now for 38 years."

Many more - Now I don't have time today to go into all of their stories.

A)But I am going to put their names on the screen - and you can take a picture of it -

B)Do your own research. - Examine their stories
MENTION A FEW

C)Former Agnostic, **John Lennox** - British Professor of Mathematics and philosopher of science at the University of Oxford

D)Former Agnostic **Viggo Olsen** who was a brilliant surgeon who graduated magna cum laude from medical school and later became a diplomat of the American Board of Surgery .

E)Olsen went from an agnostic to giving up his esteemed career, **to serve as a missionary for Jesus in Bangladesh**

Former Darwinian atheist **Richard Lumsden** the professor of parasitology and cell biology, and the dean of the graduate school at Tulane University.

Former Atheist scholar **Rosalind Picard** an inventor who founded MIT's Affective Computing Research Group

These are really intelligent people who when they examined the evidence they found it to be **undeniable.**

Faith occurs when the unexplainable and the unimaginable are confronted by the undeniable.

The Canadian scientist G. B. Hardy one time said,

“When I looked at religion I said, I have two questions. **#1, has anybody ever conquered death, and #2 , if they have, did they make a way for me to conquer death?**

I checked the tomb of **Buddha**, and it was occupied, and I checked the tomb of **Confucius** and it was occupied, and I checked the tomb of **Mohammed** and it was occupied,

But when I came to the tomb of Jesus it was empty. And I said, So There is one who conquered death.

And I asked the second question, Did He make a way for me to do it? And I opened the Bible and discovered that He said, **‘Because I live you shall live also.’”**

THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR!!!

Because of the Resurrection of Jesus our faith is built on a Rock Solid Foundation.

A)And #2 Because Jesus rose from the dead - that means that our Sins can be forgiven and forgotten.

B)Etch A Sketch – Precursor to the Laptop – Bad Picture – Turn over and Shake it – Gone

Ever wish you could have an Etch A Sketch for your life: Jesus Provided the way!

A)Sins though many are forgiven –

B)Offers a New Start – New creation in Christ - old things have passed away become new!

C)Sins forgiven - forgotten!!!

1)God has the ability - to put our sins out of his remembrance - AGAIN?

Listen, Since Jesus ROSE from the dead, that means,

A)Guilt doesn't have the last word in our lives.

B)We have all made a lot of mistakes

1)if we knew them all, we probably wouldn't want to sit by each other -

C)But Jesus took the full penalty of our sin on the cross

1)**so that there is no more condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus.** Romans 8:1

Go back to our original text -

A)Go and tell the Disciples and Peter -

B)Wasn't Peter a Disciple? Yes - but I think at that point Peter wasn't feeling like a disciple anymore

C)3 Days earlier he did the thing that he would have never imagined doing - he swore - he would do

1)These others might forsake you - not me

D)Peter denied that he even knew Jesus - 3 times

Some of you here have done that too. - Done things you thought never do! Played the prodigal

A)Walked away from Jesus - living in Sin - doing your own thing

B)The Prodigal son - the grass is greener on the other side - found out it really wasn't

C) Some of you are in that place right now -

1)Done things that you never could of imagined yourself doing

D)The prodigal Spent his inheritance on wild living - fun for a while -

1)**Even the Bible says - sin is pleasurable - For a season / fun sinning? -**

The Season comes to an end- sin causes grief and pain- fills your heart with Shame

A)The Prodigal son ends up in a pig pen - then he comes to his senses - I have sinned - far from God

B)I need to go home - tell my dad - I have sinned - not worthy to be called his son any longer - servant

C)That is the shame that comes from Sin - **I am not worthy to be your kid - be in this family** - church

1)Dad said nonsense, welcomed him home w/ open arms

D)God's heart toward you today. Offers you Forgiveness sin and Freedom From Guilt - shame

1)Come home today - Jesus is waiting for you

So Because Jesus is Risen

A)Your faith is not empty – it is Rock Solid – Your sins have been forgiven

#3 Because Jesus is Risen You have a Hope for the future that is secure –

A)Hope = Absolute expectation of coming Good

B)Apostle Peter put it this way: ³ **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, - 1 Peter 1:3 ESV**

C)It is a Hope that is ALIVE - Based on Substance!

The Baseball season started Thursday - and there are baseball fans all over the US - Hope....

A)That hope is not real - it is a pipe dream

B)But for those who know that Jesus Rose from the dead - **The Hope of heaven is a guarantee.**

1)He beat death so that death doesn't have to beat us

C)And With the Hope of Heaven comes the Hope of a wonderful inheritance.

1)Peter went on to say- ⁴ **and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. 1 Peter 1:4**

D)That is why when you are around a person who know Jesus -

1)Who know they are about to die - peace / Joy

E)Dad in 2020 - Not afraid to die - looking forward to it! - Living Hope - **FAR BETTER for me!**

1)Wasn't happy about - Leaving mom or us - but he knew what was waiting for him - / his time? Peace

The Resurrection of Jesus reminds us that sorrow doesn't have the last word.

A)Our tears don't have the last word. - DEATH doesn't have the last word.

B)If our loved ones Knew Jesus - we are going to see them again. - Waiting for us.

C)The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that Jesus has the Last Word!!

Heaven is waiting for us- Jesus is going to wipe away every tear - bind up every wound

A)Restores what has been lost and broken

B)What we have waiting for us is far beyond what we could even IMAGINE

C)PAUL VISION - NO WORDS!!

Since Jesus has Risen from the dead

#1#1Your faith is Rock Solid -

#2Your sins can be forgiven

#3 You can have a hope that your future is secure

#4 **We are NOT to be pitied but we are to be Envied** – three reasons:

1st Our Status has changed dramatically

A)On the road to hell - on the road to heaven

B)Full of sin - Declared Righteous in God's eyes

C)We are told this in 2 Corinthians 5:21 -**For God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

To Put it another way: Jesus who had no sin in him, became sin filled- so that we who were full of sin could be made SIN FREE!

We are given HIS STATUS - We get to enjoy his status.

A)Next week we are beginning a short series - Divine exchange - -

B)Here is the idea: We get to trade everything that we are not - for everything that HE IS.

C)His righteousness - ours - his power - ours - his life ours.

Think of it this way:

A)In my ministry travels - I have traveled to 30 different countries - 100's /100's of flights

B)There have been a few times where I have traveled with a friend who had like a million miles

C)They used their miles/their status to upgrade me to first class.

1)Flying first class is a whole different flying experience - service different / food / seats

My friend was willing to give up his points so I could gain his status.

A)Was I going to say no? - No I keep my coach status - I stay in the cattle car.

B)Now here is the thing about flying first class

1)You still encounter turbulence - no extra shock absorbers in that part of the plane.

C)People who know Jesus - go through difficulties

D)Also those in first class still have to endure long flights - and delays -

E)But let me tell you this - flying in first class is a whole different journey / Sleep / rest -

Now to make the analogy more biblically correct Jesus didn't just offer us his points /status

A)He traded places with us - He took your seat in coach

B)Clear in the back - the last row that doesn't recline - right by the bathrooms -

1)Middle seat sandwiched between 2 big football....

C)He died in our place - But Rose again to reclaim his status - and Join us

D)You know when you are boarding a plane - walk through first class - bit of envy right

E)We are to be envied - flying first Class with Jesus

#2 We are to be envied - because we know why we are here on earth - what we are living for.

A)We have been made to live in a relationship with God - Sin separated us./ Jesus died / restore that...

B)Jesus said: John 17:3 - **And this is eternal life - know God and Jesus Christ who he sent!**

C)Quality of life - walking with Jesus - experiencing Jesus - enjoying Jesus

#3 We are to be envied because we know how the story ends

A)Jesus who Rose again from the dead Promised to COME BACK again - Set up his Kingdom

B)We get to be a part of that!! -

C)The reality of the Resurrection means to those who believe

1)Faith is Rock Solid, Sins forgiven, Living Hope
You are Experiencing real life.

But if you are here today and you haven't embraced Jesus -

A)What is your faith in? - Weight ? Merit ?
Evidence

B)You are still in your sins

C)No hope in death - No hope of heaven - but that can all change for you today. - PRAY

Have you received Jesus gift of life?

A)Yours today - Embrace Jesus!!

B)Sins forgiven! Freedom guilt and shame!

1)Hope of Heaven! - Experience real life!

Played the Prodigal - - Done things you never thought you would do? guilt/ Shame

A)Emptiness? - Season of pleasure has passed

B)RETURN - open arms

BAPTISM / MAGNIFY