

Healing Our Nation With the Hope of Resurrection Sunday

As we celebrate Easter this Sunday, about 40% of Americans will likely attend a service. Unfortunately, research indicates that only a fraction actually understand this momentous day's true meaning.

Here's the real story – the most remarkable comeback story in the history of the world! In his gospel account, the apostle John tells us that Mary Magdalene, the first to realize the tomb was empty, mistook Jesus for a gardener. John describes the scene when she finally recognizes Jesus:

“Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’

“She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher).

“Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”’

“Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her” (John 20:16-18, NKJV).

What a powerful moment! Mary Magdalene thought Jesus was dead. She had initially come to prepare His body for burial. (Jewish burials involved multiple steps beyond laying a body in a tomb.) But to her surprise, she came face to face with the resurrected Lord. In an instant her mourning turned to dancing and her weeping into joy.

In other words, Mary was suddenly overjoyed, filled with unexplainable hope that turned her world right side up. Jesus’

resurrection proved that death did not have the last say.

If you think about it, the hope that Mary experienced on the day of Jesus' resurrection is the same hope you and I celebrate this Easter Sunday. Hope that comes from Jesus Christ is not just wishful thinking. It is a powerful reality that changes the world. Here are four things hope accomplishes in our lives:

Helps

Hope helps you cope with the darkness of disappointment. At Easter we recognize the grief and tragedy of death, but we no longer despair. We know that the story ends in resurrection. When you know Jesus Christ, Easter becomes more than a religious observance. It is a life-changing personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Opens

Hope opens you up to the new possibilities of life fully restored in Christ through salvation. With the hope of Christ, we can experience renewal after defeat. Because Jesus came back from the grave, you can be restored and renewed, no matter how defeated you may feel.

Provides

Hope provides an answer when you doubt. Today, you may be wondering if you can genuinely trust Jesus. But if you sincerely search for God with all your heart by reading the Bible and listening to His Word proclaimed by trustworthy ministers, I am confident God will show Himself strong on your behalf. Hope convinces me that God will make Himself known.

Enables

First Corinthians 15:55-57 (NIV) proclaims, "'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be

to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Hope enables you to conquer sin and death, the ultimate enemy. Because Jesus lives, we have a future and a hope with Him! He has delivered us and conquered death; therefore, we live in hope! Hope is the security that our future as Christians is in His hands because of the resurrection.

The world – and our nation – badly needs hope today. Everywhere we turn, heartbreak, sorrow, suffering and chaos surround us. The suffering of the Ukrainian people is perhaps the most obvious example, but the reality is that countless millions suffer silently every day.

Easter is an opportunity to remember that no matter what life may throw at us, Christ has already overcome it by the power of His resurrection. Don't miss the true meaning of this day. Because Jesus Christ lives, you can live forgiven, lead a fulfilling life and embrace eternal hope! {eoa}

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