



grow. pray. study.

April 20, 2025 *The Victory of Christ*

Scripture: Hebrews 2:14b-15 (CEB), 1 John 3:8b (CEB), John 20:21 (CEB), and Romans 7:4b

The event that changed everything

MONDAY 4.21.25 Mark 16:1-8, Matthew 28:5-8

Today is the day **after** Easter. Put the eggs, bonnets, and flowers away for another year. But on the first “day after Easter,” Jesus’ followers were mostly stunned. Had it really happened? Today’s Scripture passages were a few decades away. Even then, “Accounts of the discovery of the empty tomb sound breathless and fragmentary. The women felt ‘great fear and excitement,’ says Matthew; ‘overcome with terror and dread,’ says Mark.... the early reports seem wispy, mysterious, confused.”

*

- Yes, the early reports differ. But they were all about a real event. “When we ask why such stories, so different in many ways and yet so interestingly consistent... could have come into existence so early, all the early Christians give the obvious answer: something like this is what happened, even though it was hard to describe at the time and remains mind-boggling thereafter.” ** The core story was true: Jesus died and now was alive again. It happened. How did that change everything?
- As Matthew reported, “he’s been raised from the dead, just as he said.” Jesus (as we saw in this series) expected the cross and told the disciples it would happen. But Jesus, against all so-called “common sense,” also anticipated his resurrection: “I give up my life so that I can take it up again” (John 10:17). Many people died on Roman crosses. Only one was alive three days later, and he predicted it. How does the singular nature of Jesus’ resurrection reinforce its significance?

Prayer: Lord God, people who knew and loved you said that, against all their expectations, you were fully alive again. Save me from being too smart to believe their eyewitness testimony. Amen.

* Yancey, Philip, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (pp. 212-213). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

** Wright, N. T., *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (p. 57). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.

The resurrection certified the victory on the cross

TUESDAY 4.22.25 John 12:28-33, 16:33, 19:28-30

Jesus did not go to the cross discouraged, defeated by the rejection of his nation's religious leaders. In that final week before the cross, he spoke about glory (from what Romans saw as the most humiliating death they could invent). Scholar William Barclay said, "Jesus did not mean by glorified what they understood. They meant that the subjected kingdoms of the earth would grovel before the conqueror's feet; by glorified he meant crucified." * Jesus also said, "I have **conquered** the world."

- About John 19:30, Pastor Hamilton wrote, "I had often interpreted those words to mean that Christ was exhausted and defeated. But then I learned that in Greek the phrase is expressed in just one word: *tetelestai*. That word is a shout of victory announcing that a battle has been won, a mission accomplished.... God's saving mission was finished." ** Jesus' self-giving love had defeated evil, hatred, and (in two more days) death. How does Jesus' victory offer you hope for living?
- Long before Jesus' cross, Moses asked God, "Please show me your **glorious** presence" (Exodus 33:18), and God "passed in front of him and proclaimed: 'The LORD! The LORD! A God who is compassionate and merciful, very patient, full of great loyalty and faithfulness'" (Exodus 34:6). In human thought, "glory" usually means power or wealth. In what ways is God's mercy, love, patience, and loyalty, which Jesus embodied, a superior kind of "glory"?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you said that from the cross, you would draw all people to you. You have drawn me. Now use me to shine YOUR glory to all in my world. Amen.

* William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of John—Volume 2*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, revised edition 1976, p. 123.)

** Hamilton, Adam. *John* (p. 136). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

Jesus triumphed where Adam failed

WEDNESDAY 4.23.25 Romans 5:15-21

Paul dictated this letter—cf. [Romans 16:22](#). It has the quality of "thinking aloud" more than written prose. Scholar William Barclay said, "The thought of this passage in one sentence... would be: 'By the sin of Adam all men became sinners and were alienated from God; by the righteousness of Jesus Christ all men became righteous... restored to a right relationship with God.' Paul said this more clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:21: 'As by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'" *

- [Genesis 3](#)'s archetypal story captured the human dilemma—the first Adam chose to ignore God's direction, go his own way, and lost innocence, which led to shame, blaming, and in the end death. Paul described Jesus as the "second Adam" in both Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. Unlike Adam, Jesus chose to follow God's will at all costs. How did that victory give you the choice to live a life that moves toward goodness, restored innocence and eternal life?
- Barclay also wrote, "Mankind was involved in a situation from which there was no escape; sin had [humans] in its power and there was no hope. Into this situation came Jesus Christ, and... by what he did, by what he is, by what he gives, he enabled [humans] to escape a situation... hopelessly dominated by sin." ** When have you seen even well-meaning human efforts go all wrong? How can those examples highlight the way all of us need what Paul called "the free gift of Christ"?

Prayer: Jesus, when you saw our world broken and hurting you didn't shrug helplessly. You defeated all our brokenness to give us light, life and hope. I praise you for doing for me, for us, what we couldn't do for ourselves. Amen.

* William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans (Revised Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 78.

** *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Jesus won the victory over death Isaiah promised

THURSDAY 4.24.25 Isaiah 25:8, 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, 54-57

Sometimes, trying to be comforting, people say something like, "Death isn't so bad." Unlike many Greek philosophers, the apostle Paul didn't view death itself positively, writing, "Death is the last enemy to be brought to an end." In his view, **only** Jesus' resurrection, making real God's promise of eternal life, robs death of its "sting." "Mortality, which is connected to human sin (see 1 Corinthians 15:56; Romans 5:12), is humankind's final and unwavering enemy until the resurrection." *

- "To say that death is anything other than an enemy is to deny the goodness, beauty and power of God's good creation. The point of resurrection is that it is the *defeat* of death.... since death is the unmaking of God's creation, resurrection will be its remaking. That, and nothing less, is the Christian hope." ** How did Jesus' victory over death give reality to Isaiah 25's promise that "The LORD God will wipe tears from every face" ([quoted in Revelation 21:4](#))?
- Because of Easter, Paul laid out the "plot" of the Bible's sweeping story of redemption this way: "*Death came through a human being: See [Genesis 3:17-24](#); [Romans 5:12-14](#). the resurrection of the dead came through one too: See [Romans 5:15-18](#).* *** Only as a human could Jesus die and then defeat death by rising fully alive. How does that truth link Christmas with Easter in your faith?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we say death is as sure as taxes. But by defeating death at Easter, you made eternal life a sure reality for me, and all who trust in you. Thank you. Amen.

* Charles A. Wanamaker, study note on 1 Corinthians 15:26 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 330 NT.

** Wright, N. T., *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians* (The New Testament for Everyone) (pp. 214-215). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

*** Charles A. Wanamaker, study note on 1 Corinthians 15:21 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 330 NT.

Jesus' Easter victory tells us, "Don't be afraid"

FRIDAY 4.25.25 Hebrews 2:14-15, Revelation 1:17-18

From ancient Rome to today, human power's last resort is the threat, "I will kill you." Roman officials puzzled over how Jesus' followers seemed unmoved by that threat. But by dying and rising again Jesus set his followers free from even the fear of death. The Bible ended with Revelation's glorious vision of Jesus saying, "I was dead, but look! Now I'm alive forever and always. I have the keys of Death and the Grave."

- You can read about Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion in all four gospels. Jesus faced evil and death at their very worst. But you can also read the Easter story in all four gospels to see that Jesus **defeated** evil and death at their very worst. Early Christians staked their lives on the truth of Jesus' victory over death. In what ways does fear of death subtly shape your life choices? How can Jesus' death and resurrection set you free from that fear?
- When someone we love dies, we often use "combat" words like "she lost the battle." But Paul denied that death "wins": "Where is your victory, Death?" ([1 Corinthians 15:55, quoting Hosea 13:14](#)) For a Christian, death is not a defeat. Methodism's founder, John Wesley, said, "Let this especially fortify us against the fear of death: It is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt." * How can taking in the full meaning of Jesus' resurrection give you greater trust in God's eternity, where death will be no more?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you went where most of us most dread going—the realm of death—and came out victorious! You offer me the choice to join you in that victory. I accept your offer of a life that lies beyond the power of death. Amen.

* From sermon 137, "On the Resurrection of the Dead," at [The Wesley Center Online: Sermon 137 - On the Resurrection of the Dead](#).

Resurrection Power: the victorious Jesus Above All Rulers

SATURDAY 4.26.25 Ephesians 1:18-22, Revelation 11:15, 12:10-11

Ephesians 1 asserted that “his body, the church, is the **fullness** of Christ.” At that time, “church” didn’t mean mainly buildings or policies, but a community of deeply committed people who served God and their society together. (Ideally, it still means that.) When faithful to God’s calling, the church is where God’s people can live into God’s power more fully—the breathtaking cosmic power at work on Easter as Christ rose from the dead (verse 20). Like Ephesians, Revelation spoke first to Christians living in the first-century Roman Empire, a reign of terror that called its emperor “Lord” and divine. John’s vision boldly said God, **not** Caesar, was “Lord of Lords and King of kings.” “It is easy for modern readers to miss John’s audacity: banished... he recounts a funeral dirge over the most powerful empire the Mediterranean world had ever known. Rome was close to the height of its power; the church was growing but may have constituted less than 0.1% of the empire’s population.” *

- In Ephesians 1:18-19, Paul prayed that “the eyes of your heart” will see “what is the hope of God’s call, what is the richness of God’s glorious inheritance among believers, and what is the overwhelming greatness of God’s power that is working among us believers.” How would tapping into that hope and power at work in your daily life deepen your workdays and your worship? How did this Easter attune you more fully to God’s awesome power? Rome was hardly unique. Human rulers have often claimed divine status (e.g. Nazi soldiers wore belt buckles that said, in German, “God is with us”). “The basis for the Lamb’s victory [in [Revelation 17:14](#)] is that ‘he is Lord of lords and King of kings’.... Just as the Babylonian king [in Daniel 4] was addressed by this title, so the king of latter-day Babylon (Rome) in John’s day was similarly addressed.... The Lamb exposes as false the divine claims of the emperor and others like him.” ** Do you trust that Jesus is “king of kings” over all human rulers, one you can trust as your “place of safety” ([Psalm 46:11](#))?

Prayer: Jesus, right under the nose of Roman emperors who claimed to be divine, John and the first Christians said **you** are truly Lord. I join them in trusting in your victory over evil and death and in their life-changing hope. Amen.

* NIV, *Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* (p. 11188). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

** G. K Beale and D. K. Carson, ed., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007, p. 1139.

Prayer Requests – [cor.org/prayer](https://www.cor.org/prayer) Prayers of peace and comfort for:

To **Bob Swisher** following the death of **Chuck Swisher** (Father), who died 4/11/2025.

To **Brenda Classen** following the death of **Theodore Michael (Mike) Classen** (Husband), who died 4/13/2025.

To **Alec Adolphson** following the death of **Julie Adolphson** (Wife), who died 4/14/2025.