

TALKING POINTS

EASTER - THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

LEARNING IN

In this time of Easter, when many celebrate the power of the resurrection of Jesus, there's a question which can rightly be asked... What difference does being a Christ follower make in these difficult circumstances? Why do we need Christ now?

The answer is hope - we all need hope in our lives. It's a unique hope, not just hope that things are going to get better, but an assurance our best days will *ultimately* come because Jesus' resurrection shows us we have the hope of *eternal* life.

Jesus' rising from the dead is the centerpiece of our hope, and here are reasons the resurrection is important to us all - The resurrection proves that the claims Jesus made about himself are true.

The resurrection validates the Bible

The resurrection proves God will judge the world one day

The resurrection provides genuine hope for eternal life

The message of Easter is simple - Jesus died for our sins, and in turn, *defeated death* so we could experience eternal life with Him.

Read 1 Peter 1:3, Romans 8:11

Do you believe Jesus rose from the dead? If so, what does it mean to you?

LIVING IT OUT

Since the resurrection of Jesus is so central to the Christian faith, a reasonable question to ask would be - why should I believe it? Here are four compelling reasons to consider:

The Empty Tomb - to this day, the tomb of Jesus remains empty. Though the powerful opponents of Jesus had great motivation to ensure the tomb wouldn't be empty (they didn't want a "messiah" or martyr), come Easter morning it was.

Read John 20:1-8

Why was it so improbable Jesus' tomb would be empty Easter morning?

The Eyewitness Accounts - the New Testament writers documented where over a period of 40 days Jesus appeared alive at least a dozen different times to more than 515 people.

Read Mark 16:9, 1 Corinthians 15:3-7

Does it surprise you Jesus was seen so many times after His resurrection?

The Disciples' Transformations - from fearful, cowering men who ran when Jesus was arrested and sentenced to death to bold, confident proclaimers of the resurrection who ended up being beaten, stoned to death, tortured, and crucified.

Read Matt 26:56, John 20:19, Acts 2:14, 22-25

How does someone go from terrified to be recognized as a follower of Jesus to unafraid to die for the cause of Jesus?

The Existence of the Church - in over 2000 years of history, armies have marched on it, dictators have tried to extinguish it, critics said it would be swept away by history. Even populated by imperfect humans, still it exists.

Read Matthew 16:17-18

Why does the Christian church grow *most* in times of crisis and in places of persecution?