

# Today We Celebrate...

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for the great gift of your son. As we've been singing, the Messiah, your king, our savior.

We thank you for the forgiveness of our sins. We thank you that he rose up from the grave. And that you've given us life forever with him and with you.

We just praise your name. As we look into your word and as we reflect on the story, please touch our hearts. Please speak to us. We ask for Christ's glory.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, this story that we celebrate this morning never gets old.

See him there on the cross. His body hanging lifeless.

[ 1 : 11 ] Dead. See Joseph and Nicodemus struggling with grief. Working together to take his body down from the cross.

Carefully wrapping his body with strips of linen. Adding spices and myrrh.

Their vision blurred by the tears. See them carrying his body to the garden. To the tomb.

And laying it down. See them heaving with all their might against the stone to roll it securely in front of the entrance.

See them walking away. Spent. Empty. Exhausted. Numb. Hearts shattered.

[ 2 : 16 ] It's hard. It's hard even to imagine just how they felt. It was a day. It was a night of sorrow. Heavy anguish.

That would not lift. And it weighed upon them all. The men and the women. It was with this same grief that these women.

Mary Magdalene. Mary the mother of James and Salome. Arose very early in the morning and went to the tomb with spices. A gift bought to honor the Lord Jesus.

But how will we roll the stone away and get in? They were asking. See the shock on their faces as they looked up toward the tomb.

The same tomb that they saw Joseph and Nicodemus go into with his body. Now here it stands.

Wide open. A gaping hole. The massive stone rolled off to the side.

[ 3 : 20 ] Feel their hearts begin to pound. As they look around wondering what's happening here.

See these women moments later fearfully stepping down into the tomb.

Peering into the black hole. Cautiously. Unsure of what awaits them inside. See them covering their eyes with their hands.

And falling face down to the ground. Startled by that bright light shining forth from the angels. Feel the terror in their hearts.

Hear the angelic voices speaking. Majestic and resolute. Don't be alarmed.

You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene. Who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the women peeking through their fingers at where the angels point.

[ 4 : 36 ] The place where they laid him. Seeing nothing but a pile of cloth strips. See the women stumbling out of the tomb.

Their hands shaking. Their faces pale. The most confused look on their faces. In utter shock. This is what happened according to Mark.

And Matthew. And Luke. And John. Can you imagine how this might have felt. Now what do we do. The angel said.

He has risen. He has risen. I imagine those words just echoed. Again and again in their minds in these moments.

He has risen. The exact order of events from this point on is a little fuzzy. Because each of the four gospel accounts includes some unique details.

[ 5 : 39 ] About what happened from this point on. As the disciples began to encounter Jesus alive again. But Matthew tells us what the women did.

In their trembling. And bewilderment. What the angel said was not lost on them. They began to run. They were afraid.

Says Matthew. Yet at the same time. They were filled with joy. They ran to tell the disciples. The apostles.

And then it happened. All of a sudden. There he was. Jesus. Alive. Standing right there.

In front of them. Speaking to them. See these women. Falling. Face down to the ground. Grabbing a hold of his feet.

[ 6 : 40 ] Uttering words of praise and worship. Afraid. Afraid. Yet rejoicing. Yet rejoicing. Looking up at his precious face. The same face of the man that they had seen die.

Their Lord Jesus. Jesus. And the story goes on from here. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene. To Peter. To two men on the road to Emmaus.

Later that evening to the apostles. And others in Jerusalem. And we read how little by little. Their doubt. Their disbelief.

Gives way. To the reality of his resurrection. From the dead. Their grief. And their sorrow. And their fear. It gives way. To this unshakable.

Triumphant joy. Luke gives us a little summary. In the book of Acts. Chapter 1. Verse 3. He says. After his suffering. He.

[ 7 : 38 ] That's Jesus. Presented himself. To them. And gave many convincing proofs. That he was alive. He appeared to them. Over a period of 40 days. And spoke about the kingdom of God.

And the story. Goes on from there. It doesn't stop. Jesus is taken up to heaven. Before their eyes. On the Mount of Olives. Days later.

The Holy Spirit of God. Comes down upon these men. In the upper room. And they begin to go out. And proclaim the news. That Jesus. Is alive. That he has risen from the dead.

Doing signs and wonders. Just like Jesus did. First in Jerusalem. Then in Judea. And Samaria. The surrounding regions. And from there out. Towards the ends of the earth.

And for almost 2,000 years. This glorious news. Of God's life-giving power. And how he resurrected his son. From the dead. This news has been traveling the globe.

[ 8 : 39 ] Reaching into every corner of the earth. Even here. Little town of Davidson. This is the story that never gets old.

The story of Jesus' resurrection. From the dead. What does this all mean? Just what is it that we are celebrating today? Well I came up with four things.

Thing number one. This morning we celebrate God's triumph over darkness. If you remember back to John's gospel.

At the very beginning. John chapter 1 verse 4. This is what John said. He said. In him. Referring to Jesus. In him. Was life. And that life was the light.

Of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness. Darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it. The devil made his play against God's son.

[ 9 : 42 ] Through Judas the betrayer. But the devil failed. His work was completely undone. That morning. When Jesus rose up from the dead.

We celebrate God's triumph. Over darkness. The unbelieving world. Also made its play. Against God's Messiah.

The religious leaders. And the people in Jerusalem. They did their worst to him. They even killed him. But they couldn't beat him. Or stop him. He rose up from the grave.

His light cannot be extinguished. Today we celebrate God's triumph. Over darkness. Just as God foretold. Through the psalmist.

Long ago. In Psalm 2. Why do the nations conspire. In the people's plot. In vain. The kings of the earth.

[ 10 : 40 ] Rise up. And the rulers band together. Against the Lord. And against his anointed. The one enthroned in heaven. Laughs.

The Lord scoffs at them. Saying. I have installed. My king on Zion. My holy mountain. They banded together.

Against the Lord's anointed. They made their plots and plans. And conspired. But all of it was in vain. It failed. That first day of the week.

God raised him back to life. From the dead. And it was God. Who had the last laugh. As they scrambled. Trying to figure out. How do we cover this up? This morning we celebrate. God's triumph. Over darkness. Nothing. Can stand against. Christ Jesus. The Lord of glory. Number two.

[11:38] Today we celebrate. God's power. Over human death. Since the day. Adam rebelled. Long ago in the garden. Death has been a big problem.

For all of us. We've been ruled. By death. It was the great consequence. Given to us by God. For our sin. But now hear the good news. Paul says it like this. In first Corinthians. Chapter 15. Verse 20. Christ has indeed. Christ has indeed. Been raised from the dead. The first fruits of those. Who have fallen asleep. For since death. Came through a man. The resurrection. Of the dead. Comes also through a man. For as in Adam. All die. So in Christ.

[12:32] All will be made alive. But each in turn. Christ. The first fruits. Then when he comes. Those who belong to him.

Then the end will come. When he hands over the kingdom to God. The father. After he has destroyed all dominion. Authority. And power. For he must reign. Until he has put all his enemies. Under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed. Is death. This is the good news of Jesus.

What happened that morning. Jesus' resurrection is just the beginning. It's the first fruits. Of those who have died. It's the first taste. Of God's life giving power.

Over death. And the full harvest is coming. When Jesus returns. For all who are in Christ. Just as all who are in Adam.

[13:33] Die. That's all of us. That's the whole human race. So all who are in Christ. All who believe in his name. Will be raised to life. Will be made alive.

By that same power. That brought Jesus back to life. From the dead. And so today we celebrate God's power. Over human death.

God's victory against that last. That greatest. Of enemies. Paul tells us a little more. Of what it will be like. In the same chapter.

Verse. 52. He says. In a flash. In the twinkling of an eye. At the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound. The dead will be raised imperishable.

And we will be changed. Verse 54. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable. And the mortal with immortality.

[14:32] Then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up. In victory. And so we will take up the taunt.

On that day. Where oh death. Is your victory. Where oh death. Is your sting. Today we celebrate God's power.

Over human death. Over our own deaths. That are coming. Thanks be to God. He gives us the victory. Through Jesus Christ. Our Lord.

Number three. Today we celebrate the indestructible life. Of our great high priest.

Jesus. In the letter to the Hebrews. God tells us that we need a high priest. We need a go between. We need someone to stand in the gap between us.

[15:36] And this holy God. The Lord of glory. We need a man who will represent us before him. And not just once. But forever.

Permanently. And because God loves us so much. He appointed a man. To be our high priest. Forever. We read this in Hebrews.

Chapter 7 verse 16. That there is one who has become a priest. Not on the basis. Of a regulation. As to his ancestry.

But on the basis. Of the power. Of an indestructible life. Verse 23. He says.

There have been many of those priests. Referring to the Old Testament priests. The Levitical priests. That served at the temple. And at the tabernacle. There have been many of those priests. Since death.

[16:33] Prevented them from continuing in office. But because Jesus lives forever. He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely.

Some translations say forever. Those who come to God. Through him. Because he always lives. To intercede for them. They tried to extinguish his life.

They tried to snuff it out. They tried to destroy it. But they couldn't do it. God raised Jesus up from the dead. To glorious indestructible life. So that he could be the high priest that we need. Forever. And so if you're trusting in Jesus today. If you believe in Jesus. That he rose from the dead. You will always have a man. Alive. Interceding. On your behalf. Speaking to God. For you. Because Jesus rose up that day. [17:33] And lives forever. He is able to save you and me. Completely. Forever. Today we celebrate the indestructible life.

Of our high priest. And reason number four. The last reason. By the way. There's more reasons we could add to this list. But.

I thought we'll keep it to four this morning. Today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Because through it. We have hope. For a heavenly inheritance.

First Peter. Chapter one. Verse three. Peter writes. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord. Jesus Christ. In his great mercy.

He has given us new birth. Into a living hope. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From the dead. And into an inheritance.

[18:29] That can never perish. Spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven. For you. Who through faith are shielded by God's power.

Until the coming of the salvation. That is ready to be revealed. In the last time. What comes to us. Through this awesome thing. That the followers of Jesus witnessed. That Sunday morning. Peter says. New birth. Into a living hope.

God. God. God. Because of his great mercy. And love. Is giving sinners. Like you and me.

A new birth. A fresh start. A new life. And in this new life. We have a living hope.

[19:25] Hope. It's not just a wishful thinking. Kind of hope. It's not a. Maybe. I don't know. But I hope so. Kind of hope. It's a person. Who is alive.

From the dead. Securing for us. What we hope for. Right now. Kind of hope. It's not just a hunch. It's not just a possibility.

It's not just a possibility. Like if he raised Jesus from the dead. Maybe. He'll raise us too. No. It's a done deal. Past tense. According to Peter.

He has. Done it. He has given it. Since he has raised Jesus. Already done. Through his resurrection. We have this living hope.

He secured it for us. And more than that. We have an inheritance. Says Peter. An inheritance.

[20:25] Let's think about. This idea of inheritance. For a moment. I'm not old enough. To have received any kind of inheritance. Myself. But some of you are.

Some of you have. And depending on the kind of parents you had. And the kind of circumstances. That they lived in. How they lived. You received an inheritance.

Or maybe. Didn't receive an inheritance. It all depends. Were they careful with their money? Were they successful in their work? Was their trade in demand? How long after they couldn't work anymore.

Did they live? How big was their estate? Were they thinking of you. And your future. As they saved. Or were they eager. Only to enjoy the best.

That this world has to offer. For themselves. But that's just the earthly way of things. When it comes to. An inheritance. Do you hear what Peter is saying here?

[21:21] He's saying that God intends. To give his people. An inheritance. God. A new life.

A new birth. And comes with this inheritance. Think about this. What kind of God is he? How rich. How much does he own?

How good. How kind. How generous. How loving. What's the size of his estate? What kind of inheritance will he give us?

Peter tells us that we receive all this because of his mercy. Meaning. Despite the fact that we don't deserve it. We're like the wayward child in the family.

Here on earth we might be tempted to cut that child out of the will. And yet God is merciful and he desires to give us this new birth.

[22:22] This new life with this wonderful inheritance. How do we come into this? Peter says. He has given us this new birth.

Into an inheritance. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From the dead. What happened that morning at the tomb. What the followers of Jesus witnessed.

All through that day and afterwards. Is the key. It's the thing that unlocks. All of this for us. It's through Jesus. New life from the dead. That we who believe. Are raised to new life as well. We become part of the family of God. And we become those who will share together with Christ. In the inheritance he receives. From his father.

In Paul's words. Co-heirs. With Christ. And notice what kind of inheritance this new birth brings us into. This is not like the earthly inheritance.

[ 23 : 23 ] Peter says it's an inheritance that can never perish. Spoil. Or fade. He says it's kept in heaven. For us.

Until that day when our final salvation is revealed. Maybe you've experienced this or seen this. Family members fighting over what's left of mom and dad's belongings. Mom and dad's money. Mom and dad's estate. Relationships damaged so deeply. Someone not getting what they were supposed to. What was promised. What was expected. What was written in the will. Someone squandering the inheritance.

On the sly. So that when the time came to divvy things up. There was nothing left for the rest. But according to Peter. None of that kind of stuff can happen to this inheritance.

That God is giving his people. It can never perish. Spoil. Or fade. It's secure. Out of reach. In heaven. Where no thief.

[ 24 : 24 ] Or swindler. Or schemer. Can mess with it. Or get at it. And it will be given in the last time. When Jesus returns. To all who have this new birth.

This new life. With Christ. All of this blessing. Is opened up to us. Through. The resurrection. Of Jesus Christ.

From the dead. Says Peter. In the words of Paul. You have been raised with Christ. This is Colossians 3. 1. When Christ.

Who is your life. Appears. Then you also. Will appear with him. In glory. And so we celebrate today. Because Jesus. Resurrection.

Secures. Our hope. In a heavenly. Inheritance. How does this hit you this morning?

[ 25 : 24 ] Good news? You know it's easy for us to just get discouraged. When we look out at the world. And the things going on. I don't know all the details.

Of what's going on. In each of your lives. But sometimes the stuff of this world. Just gets to weighing us down. Doesn't it? He is risen.

His light. Shines in the darkness. And the darkness. Cannot overcome it. He's defeated our last enemy. Death itself. He will live forever.

Always before the father. Interceding for us. And his resurrection has secured for us. This new life. This new birth. An inheritance. That can't be taken away from us.

In the life to come. So I want to encourage us. To just rejoice. And celebrate today. Our savior. Has risen. He's risen indeed.

[ 26 : 30 ] Let's pray. Lord Jesus.

We pray and ask that. You would just cause our gaze. To stay here. On you. On your power. On your glory. On your life. On your light. We all have troubles Lord. We all have difficulties. Challenges. Stresses.

Issues. We give them to you Lord. Fill us with this joy. Of what we have.

Through Jesus. And your power. That raised him from the dead. We commit ourselves to you in his name. Amen.

[ 27 : 25 ] Amen. Thank you.