

DEEP SIX STUDY

April 4th, 2021

Easter Sunday – “Rise Up!”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS (You can view the full message on Facebook or at live.capecodchurch.com/live)

Opening: 2000 years ago *something happened*. It changed the world, and we’re still talking about it today. The people who were there told everyone they met – and then they wrote about it. But they didn’t just tell the story – they tended to tell the story and they told how they themselves fit into the story. They told what *happened to them* when they met the risen Jesus.

1. Meeting Jesus: John and Peter (John 20:1-9)

- The ones who were there on that first Easter morning had quite a story to tell. One of them was the disciple John, who wrote about what he saw – and what happened to him – in the gospel of John.
- John, like the other gospel writers, tells us that the women who went to anoint Jesus’ body were the first to see that the tomb was empty. In John’s account, Mary Magdalene returns to the disciples and tells them, then John and Peter have a foot race to the tomb to check it out.
- John tells us that Peter went into the tomb first and saw that it was empty – strangely, with Jesus’ burial clothes left behind. John then entered the tomb, and he “*saw and believed*” – he believed in Jesus; he believed that he was who he said he was.
- In his moment of clarity, John saw the empty tomb and the empty burial clothes and believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as he said he would. He realized – and chose to believe – that Jesus was who he said he was, and could therefore do what he said he could do: *forgive people of their sins*.

2. Meeting Jesus: Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18; Romans 10:9-10)

- Peter and John left to go tell the other disciples what they had seen, but Mary Magdalene (who was “standing outside the tomb crying”) stayed and looked inside again. This time she saw two angels. Then she got to be the first one to see Jesus – and she couldn’t wait to tell the disciples.
- Mary’s message to them was simple: “I have seen the Lord!” But contained in that message was a *declaration of faith* – a declaration that she believed the same thing John had chosen to believe: that Jesus was who he said he was, and could do what he said he could do.
- When we chose to *believe in* Jesus – to believe that he is the Son of God and can therefore not only forgive us of our sins but also give us the gift of real, full life – it invariably leads to a declaration of our faith to others: “He is risen, indeed!”
- Paul told us exactly that in his great letter to the Roman believers – that our declaration of who Jesus is “seals the deal” on our salvation. “Believe in your heart, and confess with your mouth...” Perhaps this Easter is the perfect time to turn your belief into a declaration – a declaration that Jesus is the Son of God who has freed you from sin and given you LIFE!

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.

Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-13; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:24-29; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:11-13

Videos of the Week: [The Messiah](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Of the four gospel accounts of the Easter story, what's your favorite version? Why do you like that one?
2. How do you account for the different details about Easter Sunday contained in each of the gospels (some are added or changed, some are left out in each version)? Shouldn't they all be the same?
3. Read John 20:8-9 again. John tells us that he ("the disciple who had reached the tomb first") saw the empty burial clothes and believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Do you think John actually made a "faith decision" at that point, or was he simply coming to a logical conclusion based on the evidence he saw? Does that distinction matter?
4. John's "moment of clarity" included his decision to believe that Jesus was who he (and all the prophecies from Scripture) said he was: the Son of God. What's the difference between *believing that* Jesus rose from the dead and *believing in* Jesus as the Son of God?
5. Read Romans 10:9-10 again. How would you answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" based on Paul's guidance to the Romans?
6. Why do you think it's so important for believers to "turn their belief into a declaration"? How does that moment of declaration "change everything," as the message told us?