

RESURRECTION

Introduction to the "Resurrection" series:

Easter is a holiday that comes with a lot of activities. Dyeing eggs, making Easter baskets, eating marshmallow peeps—just to name a few.

But Easter is more than just bunnies, baskets and hardboiled eggs. Easter is the celebration of the greatest day in history—the day that Jesus rose from the grave. The day that God demonstrated his power over death. The resurrection of this man, Jesus, turned the whole world upside down and dawned a new era of hope for God's people. Jesus truly was who he said he was—the son of God—and whoever believes in him has everlasting life. That first Easter was a miraculous event; an event that deserves our full attention.

Jesus came to give us a new hope and to show us a new way to live. He died and rose again so that we might have new life as a part of God's family. This series is about remembering the Gospel of Jesus Christ, reflecting on what he has done for us, and responding in the right way. The title of the series, "Resurrection," is the most important part of the story. Without the resurrection, death wins, but because the tomb is empty, death is defeated and life is available to all who believe. He is risen!

Read the portion of scripture below:

Matthew 12:14-21

But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he leads justice to victory.
In his name the nations will put their hope."

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About this week's scripture:

Up to this point, Jesus had been aggressively confronting the Pharisees' hypocrisy. This time, however, he decided to slip away before a things got too intense because he knew that it wasn't time for him to die yet. He had more teaching to do. And he didn't those he had healed to tell others about his miracles because he didn't want people coming to him for the wrong reasons. He wanted to teach them that he didn't just come to perform miracles; he came to give them hope and a future with God.

For hundreds of years Jewish people waited for the Messiah that they had heard about from the prophets. They were expecting the Messiah to be a king, and many probably expected an earthly kingdom. This quotation from Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 42:1-4) shows that the Messiah was indeed a king, but it illustrates just what *kind* of king he was—a quiet gentle ruler who brings justice to the nations; not a power hungry, arrogant king like Caesar. And this Messiah was here to bring hope to the entire world—Jews and Gentiles, men and women, young and old.

As we look ahead to Easter, let's remember the hope we have in Jesus. The hope that comes from the one who was sent to rescue us from sin and give us new life. It's the only hope that will always lead to justice, peace and victory. The only hope that won't disappoint us. No matter what you're going through, be encouraged, and know that there is eternal hope in Christ!

Questions for family discussion:

- Share something that you remember from church about the message today. What did the speaker talk about that interested you?
- Tell a story of a time when you received something that you hoped for.
- What is something that you are hoping for in the future? Do you believe it will happen? Why or why not?
- Sometimes God uses us to bring his hope to others. Is there anything or anyone in your life that needs the hope of Christ? What can you do to bring hope to that situation?
- Pray with your family and give thanks to God for sending his son to give hope to the world. Ask God to help you to live up to that hope and to spread it to others.