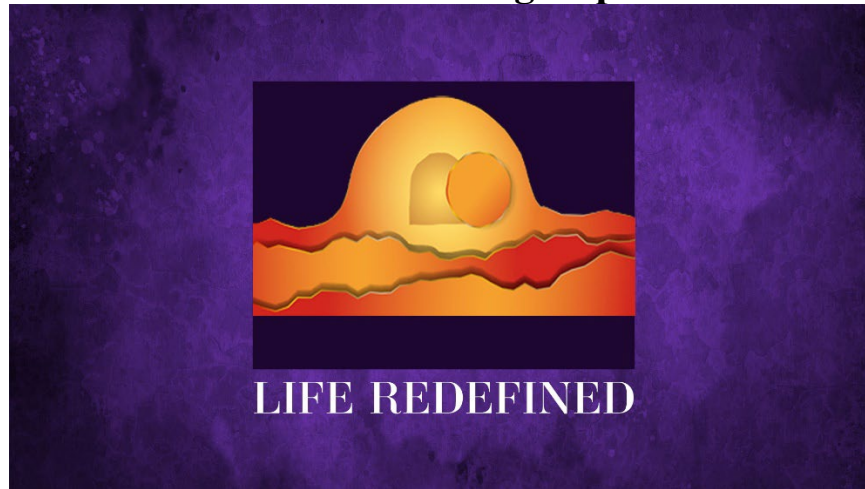


EASTER APRIL 20, 2025 Sermon Study Guide

Lead Pastor Brian Bales Redefining Expectations – *CHANGE*



The Death of Jesus

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”²⁹ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:28-30 (ESV)

The Resurrection

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.³ And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.⁶ And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. Mark 16:1-8 (ESV)

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God’s word.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Most of us do not opt in for a change in life's rhythms unless it's something familiar to us or something that we have really wanted but felt it was unattainable. Like a raise, a job promotion, a new baby, a new marriage..... you get the idea.

QUESTION: Name a significant change in your life that did not play out as you had expected. Describe your expectations and the outcome.

2. For us, death signals the end of something or someone and typically it signals a profound loss. If you have lost someone that you deeply loved, you understand the emotions of that loss and the impact. It changes how you look at life when nothing looks the same anymore.

QUESTION: How do you define in your own words, "death"?

QUESTION: If someone tried to convince you that the death of someone that you loved was a new and good beginning, how would you respond?

3. As the disciples and even Jesus's mother watched Him hang on a cross, they also watched Him die.

QUESTION: As Jesus declared "*it is finished*" what do you imagine those who loved Him were thinking and experiencing in those final moments? What would those words have meant to you?

4. As Jesus spoke those words, He gave up His spirit and died. For those present that day they likely saw an end to life as they had known it. Their son, their Rabbi, their friend was gone. His body was taken down from the Cross, transported and placed in a tomb. It is fair to assume that no one on that day expected His death to signal a new beginning or a new way of living.

QUESTION: So, where in the story do you see Jesus redefining death both then and now?

QUESTION: John 3:16 tells us that we too can have eternal life, but what is required of us?

QUESTION: How have we been offered an opportunity to redefine death while still here on earth?

5. An empty tomb signals something counter intuitive to us even today if we view it only through our own human experiences. But if we view it through a spiritual lens and adjust that lens, we will see the possibility of an abundant life come into focus. An empty tomb redefines life as we previously have known it. But we must follow King Jesus to experience that life. An abundant life means a restored relationship with God the Father.

QUESTION: Consider what about your life needs to be restored. How will you allow Jesus (because of His sacrifice on the Cross) to restore all of you to God the Father?

QUESTION: How, when and where will you share your salvation story with others who need to hear the hope of the GOOD NEWS called the Gospel, (*euangelion*, Greek for good news)?