**Easter 2018**  week of April 1, 2018

The Beautiful Empty Tomb

**What would change for you if the remains of Jesus (his bones) were found?**

C.S. Lewis wrote: *Jesus has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought and beaten the king of Death. Everything is different because he has done so.* **Discuss together what you think has changed because Jesus “met, fought and beat the king of Death.”**

Jeremy McKeen says: “*If Jesus is physically alive, then he’s in a category all by himself, and the only logical response is to live for him…But if he’s not alive, then the only logical response is to live for yourself…”* **Do you agree/disagree with Jeremy McKeen’s conclusions? Why? Why not?**

When Jesus was betrayed into the hands of sinners, what they did to him, showed the very essence of sin, which 1 John 3:4 describes as “lawlessness.” They assaulted the Son of God with the intent to kill. **Is “lawlessness” how you have typically viewed sin? Explain.**

**In what ways does such a view of sin help us understand ourselves and others?**

*“Are you the king of the Jews?”*

*“My kingdom is not of this world.” “But yes, you are right in saying I am a king.” “The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth.”* You and I need to carefully ponder these statements of Jesus.**What do they tell us of who he is and why he had come?**

Every facet of Jesus’ life… from his conception, to his birth, to his escape to Egypt as an infant; to his childhood years lived in Nazareth, to his baptism in the Jordan River, to his temptation by Satan in the desert, to his years of public ministry, to his betrayal, arrest and trial, to his crucifixion, death and resurrection….… revealed the truth. Jesus said to Pilate: “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” **Discuss together what you see as the implications of this statement.** Truth is personal. **What does that mean? Explain.**

**Read Luke 24:13-35, then** i**nteract with Jon Bloom’s statement.**

*“Jesus called them "foolish" and "slow to believe" the Scriptures. Their* ***outward inability*** *to recognize Jesus mirrored their* ***inward unbelief*** *of what the Scriptures revealed about him.*

*Jesus fully intended to help them see him. But notice his priority…Before Jesus opened their physical eyes, he opened their heart-eyes. How did Jesus do that? As he walked along the road with them, he also [walked them through the OT Scriptures]. "living and active" Word*. https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/cleopas-the-eyes-that-are-most-important-to-jesus

Only the truth of Scripture could put in proper perspective for them, the things that had happened to Jesus. God had foretold hundreds and hundreds of years in advance specifics that would happen to his Messiah. This is what Jesus spoke of with those two. In John 5:39-40, Jesus had said (to the religious leaders in the presence of his disciples): *“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”* The OT Scriptures told the story of Jesus long before it happened. **Why did God do this?**

I encourage you to read on your own Isaiah 44-45. God foretold what would happen to prove that he is the Sovereign One who brings about his purposes on the earth. He had said to Eve a Rescuer would come. And across the centuries that followed, God revealed more and more details of who this Rescuer would be and what he would do. As they walked along the road to Emmaus, Jesus referenced and explained to the two men, passage after passage. One thousand years before it happened, and long before the Romans even thought it up, **Psalm 22** described the crucifixion of the Messiah. **Read Psalm 22 together, noting the specifics of what happen to the Messiah.**

Along with Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 and Hosea 6 foretold the Messiah’s resurrection. Read these passages together or on your own – noting the specifics that were said. Even the story of Jonah foretold the death and resurrection of Jesus – see Matthew 12:40.

After they recognized Jesus, they said to one another: *“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us and opened the Scriptures to us?”* **How did Jesus burn their hearts? Read Jeremiah 23:29.**

Zac Hicks says, *“What set their hearts ablaze — was an interpretation of Scripture that put Jesus and his finished work front and center.”* https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/set-our-hearts-on-fire-again

**Do you agree/disagree with Zac Hicks and why?**

**Interact with Tim Keller’s and Tom Wright’s statements.**

Tim Keller writes: *On Easter I always say to my skeptical, secular friends that, even if they can’t believe in the resurrection, they should want it to be true. Most of them care deeply about justice for the poor, alleviating hunger and disease, and caring for the environment. Yet many of them believe that the material world was caused by accident and that the world and everything in it will eventually simply burn up in the death of our sun. They find it discouraging that so few people care about justice without realizing that their own worldview undermines any motivation to make the world a better place. Why sacrifice for the needs of others if in the end nothing we do will make any difference?* http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2017/april/8041017.html

N.T. Wright says: *The message of the resurrection is that this world matters! Because Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead, Christianity is good news for the whole world…* *Easter means that in a world where injustice, violence and degradation are endemic, God is not prepared to tolerate such things— this present world must now be addressed with the news that healing, justice, and love have won.*  *This is why we work and plan, with all the energy of God, to implement the victory of Jesus [into every facet of life].* http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2017/april/8041017.html

Jesus is the sight-giver; Jesus is the hope-giver.