**Not Afraid – We have Easter**

**We have reasons to be afraid – our health, economy, the future. What will life be like? What will happen? (Receipts from store…)**

**More contagious than Covid-19 and fear – is HOPE! We’ve been talking about how God gives us peace and hope in the midst of fear.**

**\*\* We have another reason to not be afraid - we have… Easter**

**Today billions of people celebrate the most important and significant event in the history of the universe. God came to earth… redeemed mankind thru his death and rose again.**

**It’s the arch of the entire Bible… let’s look at Matthews eyewitness account -Matthew 28:1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, (Sabbath is Sat. it is early Sunday morning) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. (other gospels record 2-3 additional women – coming to finish burial preparation – cut short by the sabbath)**

**2 There was (before they got there) a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. (Chilin - what’s up - ain’t no big deal) 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. (the holiness of God) 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.**

**The response to angelic beings, God’s messengers – fear and faint. The resurrection is terror to the servants of sin, because it is proof of their own contempt of God.**

**BTW - some respond to C19 fear like this - drop like dead, give up. What’s your response to the fear around you? Are giving up?**

**The women showed up shortly afterwards… 5 The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. (some of you are like that today – you know what the words says – but you still don’t believe it) Come and see the place where he lay. (come see the evidence) 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, (panic and joy) and ran to tell his disciples. (the first gospel evangelists – women)**

**We might be afraid right now, might doubt, might have questions – but we are to run with what we know, obey what we know = joy follows. (when they stepped out in faith…)**

**9 Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” (what’s sup?) he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”**

**\*\*An hour earlier they thought Jesus was dead… They were afraid, but what did they do? When they saw him even though they were afraid, they broke down and worshiped Jesus.**

**Let me tell you something… It may feel like we are sitting in isolation like those disciples on Saturday, with nowhere to go, nothing to do, and depressed, but God is not silent! God is not quarantined from you!**

**Do Not be Afraid (paralyzing fear) why? Because – Jesus is alive!**

**We do not need to be afraid…**

**Matthew 28:5 …Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus…**

**1. …of tomorrow, because Jesus holds the future**

**How will this end, will it ever be normal again?**

**What are you looking for?**

**God knows our dreams, desires, goals… he knows you are looking for hope. What you’re looking for deep inside is - Jesus. We cannot save ourselves. You don’t have to be afraid Jesus has your hope and future.**

**Matthew 28:5 Do not be afraid… He is not here; he has risen…**

**2. …of yesterday, because Jesus has a plan for your pain**

**Up to that point – they were huddled in a room in Jerusalem – afraid for their own lives – sheltering in place. What if they were next?**

**All their plans nailed to a cross - perceived disappointment.**

**Thursday night – after their meal / Jesus excused himself to pray – one of his disciples (Judas) turned him over to authorities.**

**Friday Morning - Eyewitness accounts record Jesus was betrayed and arrested around 1AM - Dragged thru 7 trials (3 illegal) and sentenced to death.**

**Condemned by authorities for blasphemy and accused of inciting rebellion.**

**Humiliatingly beaten / flogged, sentenced to die a violent death like a criminal by 9AM**

**7 fatal blows to Jesus – Recorded in Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn**

**1 The face – Fist & beard – weak - concussion & nerve damage**

**2-3 Back & chest – Razor sharp bones & lead tied to a whip**

**Extreme blood loss, few lived thur - reducing his flesh to meat**

**4 The head – A beating rod, crowns of thorns (now in critical condition)**

**Then forced to carry a 120lb wooden beam thru the streets - Stripped naked, (clothes gambled for at his feet)**

**5-6 His hands & feet – 7in spikes, lacerating his nerves... Dislocating the shoulders & elbow – lifted up to be mocked – bleeding out... Severe spasmodic contractions and unconsciousness**

**Suffocating (w/ hypoxia), fluid in the lungs finishes most crucifixions, as their heart ultimately fails resulting in cardiac rupture. \*\* Word Excruciating was created (out of the cross)**

**At this Jesus cries – out – “it is finished”, and Jesus gives his life – His life was not taken, it was given. Redemption paid!**

**7 The side - Make sure he was dead. No broken bones - fulfill scripture**

**That piece of wood! That symbol - history has idolized it - despised it, gold plated it, burned it, worn it and trashed it… it is tragic & beautiful – the cross of Jesus.**

**1 Peter 1:18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. 19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. (As Jesus was poured out… the greatest miracle of all time took place. Forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness for your past, your yesterday)**

**Jesus Christ forgiveness every area - blood flowed from 7 places**

**But there are things I can’t face… 1 Face - plucked & hit**

**But the things in my head, thoughts… 2 Head - Thorns in skull**

**But I’ve turned my back on God… 3 Back - beaten to a pulp -**

**But I have done… 4 & 5 Hands - nailed**

**\* But I where I’ve been… 6 & 7 Feet – nailed**

**\*\* Jesus was taken from the cross and buried…**

**But on the 3rd day the earth shook - the stone was rolled away. Not so he could get out – but so we could get in to see it!**

**The cross was the payment, the resurrection was the receipt, proving that the payment was fully accepted. Do you have your receipt?**

**That resurrection is the receipt that proclaims his greatness.**

**The king who is greater than our Debt of sin & past / our Disease & sickness / Our Depression / Our Disappointment & regret.**

**Do not be afraid of yesterday, Jesus has a plan for the pain**

**Matt 28:5 Do not be afraid… 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.**

**3. …of today - Because Jesus keeps his word**

**I find myself dwelling on two things: 1) The past, when our world felt "normal" or 2) the future, when the world might feel "normal" again. One of the hardest places to be right now is the present.**

**You do not need to be afraid; his words are true – yes & amen, they are trustworthy – he will let you down or disappoint you!**

**Matt 28:5 Do not be afraid… 6 …come and see the place where he lay...**

**4. …of death - Because Jesus gave us a new eternity**

**Because his lives – we know this life is not the end!!**

**The Bible records many resuscitations – but only one resurrection.**

**(Elijah, Lazarus, the little girl – 7 recorded) Each were brought back to life into the same body they eventually died in. But Jesus was resurrected into a new glorified body. The first in all of creation to be glorified. Those in Christ that’s our eternity! We do not need to be afraid of death!**

**5. Do not be afraid… of what others think, because it’s our turn**

**Matt 28:5 Do not be afraid… 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. (you have to know it yourself before you can tell it) 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”**

**It is your turn, like the angel, to invite those around you to come and see Jesus is risen! Tell the good news! When you get a word from God and know he is with you fear flees.**

**I care more about what God says than what you think about me!**

**I need to tell you family, friend - you might think I’m crazy, but I need to tell you... come, taste and see the Lord is good. His promises are true. See for yourself! One more…**

**6. We do not need to be afraid, because Jesus is alive and here w/ you!**

**Walking in obedience… Matt 1:9 Suddenly Jesus met them... 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” (It was not just tell them, but I will meet and be with them)**

**“there you (v7) they (v9) will see him” this is not head knowledge this is a relationship. We don’t just believe something, we know someone – JESUS. / Same with us! When you believe the truth, you will see and know HIM!**

**v.10 – “Go and tell my brothers” – How Jesus sees you – as family**

**Days earlier his disciples denied and ran away when Jesus was crucified – yet he calls them brothers (first time in scripture).**

**Maybe you have abandoned Jesus – ran – neglected Him… he offers forgiveness to you – brother, to you sister**

**He is still risen – he never died – he ascended into heaven and is seated on the throne! And he extends his presence to you today…**

**Some of you like the roman solders (v.4 were so afraid they were confronted with he holiness of God - like dead – in their fear that fell as dead – But those women disciples, in their fear, fell and worshiped.**

**How will you respond?**

**3 THINGS TO REMEMBER:**

* **Sunday is just a small part of Easter**
* **No one can earn their way into heaven**
* **There is no middle ground… We can only accept or reject the invitation.**

**A king greater than all things! Who’s name alone holds salvation.**

**Acts 4:2 - Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.**

**The color of power and authority. Jesus the royal king - King of Kings!**

**Philippians 2:6 Who, being in very nature God, (Jesus is God) did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!**

**9 Therefore God (the Father) exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**