



ENTER God's presence

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Psalms 16:9-11

Heavenly Father, you have made known to us the path of life through the life, death, and resurrection of your son Jesus. Open our ears and hearts again as we gather around your word to learn more of how wide and deep your love is for us. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **Share your highs and lows with each other?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **What was the highlight of your Easter season?**
4. **How has remembering and celebrating the resurrection of Jesus 'flipped' your life?**

Out of battery – No more memory – We can't afford it – I don't have time... Much of contemporary life is defined by limits... by scarcity... by what we don't have. We say "Enjoy it while it lasts", knowing that all good things come to an end. So we sleep. We eat. We work and we repeat the cycle over and over again. But getting by, treading water until we no longer can, merely existing is not the life we were created for, redeemed for, and raised for. Easter Sunday tells us that there is more life than we can ever imagine. The heart of Easter is not about an empty tomb, but about the fullness of life the risen Christ gives, guarantees, and make come alive in us. Christ is raised not just from the dead, he is raised to life so we can be alive with the fullness of his life. So today we experience the flipside of life... life in abundance that overflows with unbounded joy, unlimited hope, & unending love. It's a gift that you receive today, tomorrow, and the next day after... all because Christ is risen from the dead.

Week beginning:
Sunday 4th April 2021

Worship series:
**Not What You Expect:
The Flipside of Power**



VERSE for the week

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Mark 16:6-7



REMEMBER this week

Resurrection is never a conclusion; it's an invitation to enter into a life that is fully alive with new beginnings and unlimited possibilities.



LISTEN attentively

Read Mark 16:1-8

- 5. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
- 6. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
- 7. How do you think you would have reacted to the sight of an angel at the empty tomb?**

We all know that Jesus came to earth so that we might have life – life in all its fulness (John 10:10). We know that through his life, death, and resurrection, we have now been given the right to be called children of God (1 John 3:1). However, is there a difference between having access to this new life in Christ Jesus, and actually living this new life? Does your life look or sound any different after Easter than it did before? What does a full life look like now that Jesus is risen and how do we live it today?

- 8. The women who arrived at the empty tomb were greeted by an angel and with good news. What do you suppose made them so afraid that they told no one what they saw?**
- 9. What are some of the fears that stop you from sharing your faith story with others?**

The reality of the resurrection flips our experience of life on its head. Since humanity's fall into sin, every human life has ended in death and, as a result, most lives since then have been lived in fear of death. However, in light of Jesus resurrection, death no longer has to be the end. However, this can be a crippling fear for many people as well. How do I ensure that my eternal life is 'locked in'? It leads to questions like the one we find in Mark 10:17 where the rich man asks Jesus, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Living free from the fear of death is a hard habit to break, yet that is the kind of life Jesus invites us into. That is the kind of life he wants us to share with others.

- 10. How do Christians failing to live lives free from the fear of death, contribute to the apparent growing resistance towards Christian faith?**

Brennan Manning, an American Christian author once famously said, "*the greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and then deny him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.*" We have also seen numerous high profile church leaders and pastors in the news recently, whose lifestyle did not match their preaching or who have walked away from their faith. This is simply evidence that even those who seem to have risen to the top of the proverbial heap, can know all the right answers, say all the right things but still be left living a life which is not the life of freedom that Jesus makes available to all who trust in him. So how do we live this new life that Jesus offers us in light of his resurrection?



GROW deeper

Read Romans 8:1-17

The women who saw the angel and the empty tomb were understandably afraid. Imagine yourself sharing that kind of encounter today, "*I saw and angel, and it told me that (insert name of deceased person here) was not dead but had come to life again.*" Chances are you would be booked in to see a psychologist pretty quickly. At this point their logic and reasoning were overpowering them. They had not accepted the message that Jesus was alive. They had heard the words, but the reality and truth of the statement had not become real for them. Yet it must have become real at one point because the other gospels all tell of the women rushing to tell the disciples what they had seen. Most of us can empathise with these women. Most of us have experienced a point in our lives of faith where we might acknowledge the way that God wants to lead us, but our fear or apprehension about the consequences of a particular course of action prevent us from going where the Lord leads. This is the constant ongoing battle for Christians – to put aside our lives of the flesh and to live our lives in the Spirit of God. This is the struggle that Paul is talking about in Romans 8.

- 11. Which parts of your life do you still tend to 'live in the flesh' more so than 'living in the Spirit'?**

12. Are their parts of your life that you feel have become mostly led by and lived in the Holy Spirit? What are they and how did that change take place?

The apostle Paul explains in Romans 8 that our bodies, or our 'flesh', still seek to live according to its own needs and desires and that these desires are not life but actually lead to death. Yet God's Spirit alive in us, as it raised Christ Jesus from the dead, can also raise us from a life headed towards death and restore us to a new life, a life of fullness and true freedom in Christ Jesus.



LIVE purposefully

Sometimes we can be misled into thinking that our new life in Christ really only begins when he returns in judgement to take his people with him to heaven. Yet the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples in a powerful way on the day of Pentecost. That was a gift that changed the lives of the disciples immediately. They went from quietly huddling together in Jerusalem, to very publicly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus. The gift of the Holy Spirit is also something we receive in our baptism. It is God alive in us that empowers us to live according to his will and to put aside the desires of our flesh, to live a new life worthy of our calling as children of God. Martin Luther called this 'daily baptismal living'. Each day we experience the ongoing struggle between our rebellious flesh and our renewed life in the Holy Spirit. Each day we have a choice to make – to ignore the Holy Spirit and let our sinful nature direct our day, or to insist that the Holy Spirit do the driving and lead us into greater freedom and life than our flesh could ever imagine?

- 13. What are some devotional practices that you have tried that have helped you to live in the Spirit, not in the flesh?**
- 14. How does/could your baptism help you on a regular basis to overcome your old/fleshly way of living.**
- 15. What is one thing you can do before your next LifeGroup to help you live more in the freedom of the new life you have in Jesus? Share with a member of your LifeGroup and pray for each other as you intentionally attempt that this week.**



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for the gift of life and for his plan to overcome death for us.
- Thank Jesus for his life, given for you and for the new life you now have in him.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you put to death your 'fleshly desires' and to live each day in the fulness of your new life in Christ.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], the risen Jesus lives in you. Amen.