



Easter 2022

Marks of Power, Wounds of Love

Luke 24:1-12, 36-53

The resurrection of Jesus answers life's greatest questions.

I. God's Answer to Our Greatest Questions

"More consequences for thought and action follow from the affirmation or denial of God than from answering any other basic question." – Mortimer Adler

The greatest questions humanity has tried to answer are ultimately connected to the question of God.

Christianity distinguishes itself from all world religions, spiritualities and philosophies in this one central claim. We don't make a "leap of faith" based on a feeling or even the teachings of Jesus. Our faith rests totally on the fact that God acted in history to resurrect Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

For 2000 years Christians have been proclaiming this truth and offering it as the key to life's greatest questions.

"While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ...the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!'" Luke 24:4-6

The resurrection of Jesus answers life's greatest questions.

Is there a God we can know?

What is God like?

Is there life after death?

II. Life's Greatest Questions

A. Is there a God?

“While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ **They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.** He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your minds? **Look at my hands and my feet. It is me! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.**” Luke 24:36-39

After Paul was confronted by the risen Jesus and called to be his messenger, Paul described his message as the “good news of God.” Speaking of the man Jesus of Nazareth, he called Jesus God’s Son and Messiah saying:

“...who as to his human nature was a descendent of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was **declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead:** Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 1:4

There is a God, who has the power over death, and this God has revealed Himself in Jesus of Nazareth. We can know God by knowing Jesus.

B. What is God like?

How does God use His great power? What is His disposition towards you and me?

“What for Pilate and the soldiers was Jesus’ ‘crime’ – his claim to be Israel’s King – was for Matthew the sober truth. And the crucifixion was the means by which his Kingdom would be established...If it was to be God’s Kingdom, it would come about by God’s means; and **the means that the true God chooses to use are the means of self-giving love.**”
– Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone*

Nobody has ever imagined a God like this! Full of power and holy anger towards sin and injustice and yet so full of self-giving love that He offers Himself for us who have rebelled against Him! You are loved by God!

C. Is there life after death?

“**When he said this, he showed them his hands and feet.** And while they still did not believe it because of their joy and amazement, he asked them, ‘Do you have anything to eat?’ **They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.**” Luke 24:40-42

The Christian vision of eternal life is a life with resurrected bodies like Jesus in a renewed heaven and earth.

“What God did for Jesus on that first Easter day, he has promised to do for each one who is in Christ, each one

indwelt by the Spirit of Christ.” – N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*

“God will redeem the whole universe; Jesus’ resurrection is the beginning of that new life, the fresh grass growing through the concrete of corruption and decay in the old world. The final redemption will be the moment when heaven and earth are joined together at last, in a burst of God’s creative energy for which Easter is the prototype and source.” – N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*

This reality has been the ultimate hope of Jesus’ followers for 2000 years.

“Their belief in the bodily resurrection of Christ, which emerged out of many post-resurrection encounters they had with Jesus, had a profound impact on how they viewed life in this world. Far from disparaging it, they saw life in this world as a prelude and preparation for life in the next world, which they viewed as a completion and perfection of this world. It made them value life as it is, but it also gave them courage to sacrifice their lives in anticipation of another, greater one.” – Gerald Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*

III. The Great Invitation

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and **repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all peoples ...**’ Luke 24:45-47