

Intro: After the Message Song – Play the video clip, “He Is Risen” (Sermon Spice)

“When everything else is fallen ... He is Risen!” Also quotes John 16:33

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

We all know the “Bad News.” We need some “Good News.” We all know how things have gone wrong in our world. We need change we can believe in. Easter is the Good News that when everything else is fallen, Christ is Risen!” Easter is the Good News that when the world gets us down and we’ve lost hope, we can count on God’s love.

We are certainly not the first people to be looking for a change that we can believe in. The followers of Jesus had been on a rollercoaster ride the week before the first Easter. When Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the cheers of the people, hopes were running high. Many people hoped Jesus would change everything, that he would overthrow the Romans, give the people freedom and restore the nation’s fallen economy. But that didn’t happen. Instead of liberating the nation, Jesus was condemned to death and nailed to a cross. His body was placed in a tomb with Roman guards posted to protect it. When Jesus died, the hopes of the people died with Him. Two disciples that were walking back to Emmaus on Easter Sunday expressed their disappointment this way, **“We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel.”** (Luke 24:21 NLT)

Things changed alright. They went from bad to worse. Or did they? The change the people were looking for was not the change they really needed. Oh sure, it would have been great for the people living in Israel back then if they could have been set free from Roman rule, but that would have only been a temporary solution to their problems. Jesus came to bring a greater change, a change you can believe in. Immediately after the very first time one of Jesus’ disciples stated his faith in Jesus as the Promised Savior, Jesus told the disciples what this meant. Matthew 16:21 tells us, **“From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.”** (NLT)

Jesus had to die to change the way things were. He had to die to defeat our greatest enemies, sin and death. He had to die in our place to give us life. The change that Jesus promised to bring, he delivered. God always keeps His promises. We can believe God when He promises to bring about change in our lives. He changes us from being His enemies to being His friends. He changes us from being guilty people to being forgiven people. He changes us and gives us what we really need. This is change we can count on.

I'm sure that disciples felt hopeless that first Easter morning. Jesus was dead. Their hopes had died with Him. They didn't even believe the women who had gone to the tomb and came back with the good news that Jesus had risen. The disciples didn't go back to Galilee as they were told to do; they hid behind a lock door in Jerusalem. They felt hopeless and would not believe the women.

Maybe you are feeling a little short on hope right now. The world may seem to be falling down around you or your life may be spinning out of control. If that is the case, you're just like those first followers of Jesus. But when Jesus appeared to them on Easter evening, He gave them a new hope, a hope they could build their lives upon. Jesus Christ is the hope of the world. Even though everything else can let us down, when our hope is in the Lord, it is secure. The Apostle Paul tells us, **“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”** (Romans 6:3-5 NLT) Our hope is secure because Jesus who died for us rose from the dead. He defeated sin and death. We can build our lives on Him.

Jesus died on the cross for us because He loves us. Jesus died on the cross to restore us to God's family. The love that we have for one another doesn't always last. But God's love lasts forever. Our love can be conditional, but God's love is unconditional. Our love can be fickle, but God's love is eternal. The Apostle Paul describes Christ like love in these words (1 Corinthians 13:4-8), **“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”** Because God's love never fails, it is a constant in our lives. Because God will always love us, we can rely on His love.

I don't know what changes you would like to see in your life today. But I do know that God changed everything for the Good on Easter Sunday morning when Jesus kept His promise and rose from the dead. Easter changed the world for the disciples. Jesus can change our world for us, too. Jesus Christ gives us the kind of change we can believe in, a hope we can build our lives upon, and a love that will last forever. This is God's plan for you. Let the risen Lord Jesus live in your heart and give you His great gifts of faith, hope and love. Amen.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed.