

Summary

This Easter sermon focuses on the significance of Jesus' resurrection as the foundation of Christian faith. Pastor Mark emphasizes that the resurrection validates all of Jesus' promises and gives believers the assurance of eternal life, transformation, and purpose. Using the story of the two criminals crucified alongside Jesus, the sermon illustrates two possible responses to Christ: rejection with insults or humble faith asking for remembrance. The message highlights that we all deserve death due to our sin, but through God's rich mercy and grace, Jesus offers us new life and salvation that we cannot earn through good works.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us through Your Word. Help us to set aside any distractions or preconceived notions, and give us ears to hear what Your Spirit is saying to us personally. We pray that this time together would draw us closer to You and to one another. May we be receptive to Your truth and ready to respond in faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one of your favorite Easter traditions or memories from growing up, and why does it stand out to you?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 28:5-6
2. Luke 23:39-43
3. Ephesians 2:1-10
4. Hebrews 11:1

Questions

- 1. Pastor Mark mentioned that Jesus can't just be a 'good teacher' but must be either Lord, lunatic, or liar. How do you respond to this argument, and what does it mean for how we view Jesus?**
- 2. Looking at the two criminals on the cross, which one do you relate to more and why? What does their different responses teach us about approaching Jesus?**
- 3. The sermon states that 'Jesus responds to those who come to him for help.' What does this mean for how we should approach God in our daily lives?**
- 4. How does understanding that we 'deserve death but Jesus gives life' change your perspective on grace and mercy?**

5. Pastor Mark emphasized that salvation is 'not a reward for good things we have done.' Why do you think people struggle with this concept of grace versus works?

6. Ephesians 2:10 says we are 'God's masterpiece' created to do good works He planned long ago. How does this truth impact your sense of purpose and identity?

7. What does it mean practically to have Jesus as 'Lord' of your life rather than just believing facts about Him?

8. The criminal simply said 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' What does this teach us about the simplicity of faith and coming to Christ?

Life Application

This week, take time each day to reflect on one specific way Jesus has shown you mercy or grace. Write it down and thank Him for it. Also, identify one area of your life where you've been trying to 'do it yourself' instead of trusting Jesus as Lord, and intentionally surrender that area to Him through prayer and action.

Key Takeaways

1. The resurrection proves Jesus has the power to fulfill all His promises and gives meaning to everything He said and did
2. We all face the same choice as the two criminals: reject Jesus with insults or humbly ask Him to remember us
3. We deserve death because of our sin, but God is rich in mercy and offers us new life through Jesus
4. Salvation is a gift from God that cannot be earned through good works - it comes by grace through faith
5. As believers, we are God's masterpiece created to join Him in bringing His kingdom to earth

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the truth of Your resurrection that we've discussed today. Help us to live in the reality that You are alive and that Your promises are true. For those who made a commitment to follow You today, strengthen their faith and surround them with encouragement. For all of us, help us to remember that we are Your masterpiece, created for good works that You have prepared for us. May we live this week with the confidence that comes from knowing we are seated with You in heavenly places, not because of what we've done, but because of Your rich mercy and grace. Guide us as we seek to bring Your kingdom to earth in our daily lives. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.