

## Easter Service – Sermon Notes

### Introduction

We invest heavily in the value of getting to know Jesus Christ better, of growing in our personal relationship with Him. Resurrection Day reminds us that we're not crazy for doing so. It reminds us that we're not playing a game. It reminds us that we can entrust our lives to a risen, living Savior.

Today's Resurrection Day message is simply titled, "But God Raised Him from the Dead."

This day is special. It speaks for itself. So today I am just going to tell the story.

We have a statement from someone who had first-hand experience with the origin of what we now call Easter:

"We are witnesses of everything [Jesus] did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that [Jesus] is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name." -Peter the Apostle (Acts 10:39-43).

It was not the empty tomb that convinced them; but rather, it was seeing the once-dead Jesus standing very much alive before them, allowing them to touch Him, and eating and drinking with Him.

The very first skeptics of the Resurrection were Jesus' own disciples. Jesus called them slow to believe all that the prophets had written. So, after His resurrection, He remained among them for a period of 40 days, giving them "many convincing proofs" that He was in fact alive.

Matthew 27:63-64 (NIV) But after Jesus died and before God raised Him from the dead, the religious leaders who instigated the crucifixion of Jesus went on defense. They knew the real threat to their power was not in the eloquence of Jesus teachings but in His identity - in who He claimed to be.

Matthew 28:5-7 (NIV) Early that Sunday morning, two Mary's, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James approached the tomb and encountered an angel sitting on the stone that had been rolled away. The angel's message was brief but twice contained "He has risen"

Acts 3:14-16 (NIV) After healing a man lame from birth, a crowd gathered as they saw the man leaping and praising God. As the people marveled Peter declared that the man was healed in the name of Jesus... whom God raised from the dead.

The central point of the gospel as shared by the early disciples was "God raised Him from the dead."

Acts 4:8-22 (NIV) The religious leaders heard about all the commotion and tried to stop the bleeding of this message, they had them arrested and thrown in jail. But by the time they arrested them about 5,000 men had believed. The next day they brought them in and questioned them. 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them... It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead...

Acts 5:17-42 (NIV) This Jesus problem was a headache for the religious establishment. And it grew into a massive migraine in chapter 5. They put the disciples in jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life." 21 At

daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

The apostles were once again brought before the Sanhedrin for teaching in Jesus' name.

They declared their obedience to God over human authority.

The religious leaders wanted to put the apostles to death.

Pharisee Gamaliel advised caution, suggesting if this was of man's design it would fail but if it was of God they wouldn't be able to stop it.

The apostles were flogged but continued teaching about Jesus.

The preaching of Jesus's disciples was straightforward: God raised Jesus from the dead, validating His legitimacy.

The Easter Message is clear: Jesus is the One promised by God to be the Savior of the world and the proof is God raised Him from the dead. That's the message of Easter.

Without that central fact, Christianity takes its place beside all the other religions and philosophies of the world and Jesus with all the other human sages.

But with that distinction, it changes everything and leaves us with but two choices: to believe that God did or did not raise Jesus from the dead. There is far more reason to believe that He did than to believe otherwise. From the eyewitness testimonies to the millions of changed lives the evidence is compelling.

So go ahead, fully invest in getting to know the living Christ.

And if you have not yet made the decision to trust Christ as your Savior, why not make this Resurrection Day, YOUR Resurrection Day.

“But God raised Him from the dead.” And He says to all of us today, what He said to the apostle John, “I am the Living One who was dead and behold I am alive forever more.”