

**Easter**  
**April 4, 2021**

Remember Easter 2020. We were all at home. Some were watching Easter services online or on TV. There was a lot of uncertainty happening in the world. We all thought that maybe we would be shut down for a few weeks, maybe a month. I can remember telling people that even if it would be a month or so, we could still celebrate Easter together the first Sunday that we could once again come together as a congregation. Yet, we all know what happened. Who would have guessed that a year later we would still be experiencing uncertainty?

For some, the last year has brought uncertainty to their home. Some have lost their jobs. Others have had hours cut. Even if a person has been able to work from home, that has brought a whole new set of challenges into their home life as they try to juggle working from home, raising kids and relaxing all in the same place. People are experiencing uncertainty.

For some, the last year has brought uncertainty for their health. A diagnosis of cancer has changed everything. Some have been called home to heaven, and now a spouse is in a house all alone. Even if COVID-19 hasn't touched your life or the life of your family, we all know the uncertainty that it has brought into our lives. We all know the changing that keeps happening around us. How many of us have said that I can't wait for this virus to be over so that we can get back to normal? But what is "normal" anymore?

Uncertainty is the worst. Uncertainty causes a lot of stress. There is the inability to make plans because things keep changing. Just when we think we have something figured out, it changes again. Over the past year, things have kept on changing. Even though there may be light at the end of tunnel, we live in uncertain times. Yet, we want certainty and we want hope.

That's why it is important for us to be here this morning. We are here to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And we are going to discover that what happened outside of Jerusalem that first Easter Sunday nearly two thousand years ago gives us a different kind of hope—a sure and certain hope. The Resurrection of Jesus changes everything.

The Bible is filled with promises – promises of what Jesus is doing and will do in the lives of his people. It promises for example:

- That Jesus is always with us. No matter where we are, we are never alone.
- That Jesus knows every single fear and worry that we have. He knows how to take them away.
- That Jesus has the power to protect us.
- That Jesus has the power to provide for us.
- That Jesus hears our prayers.
- That he loves us.

But if the bones of Jesus are still inside a tomb somewhere outside of Jerusalem, none of those promises can be true. Why? It means that none of God's promises can be trusted. BUT, if Jesus' bones are not buried, and if his bones, along with the rest of his body, were raised back to life, and if he is alive and well this very day, then Easter changes everything. If that is true, then Jesus loves you more than you could possibly imagine. He loves you so much that he forgives each of your sins. It means that we can trust EVERY promise that God has given us. It means that these promises from God are not only for this life, but they will last an eternity.

Jesus Resurrection means that he was just the first to be raised. It means that we will follow him. It means that we not only follow him to the grave, but we follow him to heaven as well. That's what Paul means when he writes: **"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."**

Well, there it is—the greatest promise you could possibly hear this morning. If you sat down this morning and were promised that COVID-19 would disappear by the end of the week, that would be great. If you were promised that you would wake up tomorrow and be given your dream job, that would be great. If you were

promised a winning lottery ticket that gave you a guaranteed income for the rest of your life, that would be great. But none of these promises can compare to what the apostle Paul just said. Listen again, **“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”** In other words, Jesus did rise from the dead and he is just the first one who will do so. Because he won forgiveness of sins and conquered death, everyone who follows him will also be raised from the dead one day.

Talk about hope! It essentially means that this life cannot really hurt you. It can cause you pain and disappointment and frustration, sure. Yet knowing that this life is only temporary but the next life will be eternal puts things in perspective. Doesn't it? And knowing that this life may have pain but that the next life will be painless is priceless. And knowing that this life may be filled with tears but that the next life will be tear-free dries those tears a bit. Doesn't it?

It almost sounds too good to be true. It does. Eternal life? In a perfect paradise? And given to me as a free gift earned by Jesus? Is this just pie in the sky thinking? This is what Easter offers. It offers a sure and certain hope in a world that is filled with so much uncertainty.

Uncertainty is the worst. Whether it is uncertainty about your health or your wealth, or a virus or a vaccine, or your job or your relationships, uncertainty kind of stinks. In this remarkably uncertain time, aren't you glad you don't need to rely on wishes and dreams? You can rely on the sure and certain promises of God. You can rely on a Savior who is alive and well. He is your hope here...and hereafter. Amen.