

EASTER 2026

May we praise the Lord together today and every single day, regardless of what the calendar says – today is the Lord's Day, we shall be glad and rejoice in it.

Is EASTER in the Bible? Well, as a matter of fact it is... Does anyone find that shocking? I actually was a little bit shocked to see Easter does appear in the KJV of the Bible one time in Acts. So, let's read it:

Acts 12:4

*And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people.*

After further study, I learned the word Easter and the word Passover are one in the same, both coming from the Greek word *G3957 pascha*. Just an interesting side note right? I also discovered Easter was used in reference to Peter and Passover when speaking of Jesus mostly.

In Acts 12 we learn that the king had a desire in his heart to vex certain members of the church, he even killed James and since he saw it pleased the Jews to have murder and hate towards the church he decided to take it even farther to capture Peter as well and he did so, putting him in prison. The king assigned soldiers to keep watch over Peter, while waiting until after EASTER to deliver Peter to the people. But God intervened due to the many prayers of intercession lifted up by the church. So God sent an angel of the Lord to Peter in the prison and a bright light shined inside. At the same time Peter's chains fell off from his hands and the angel instructed Peter to follow him out of the prison and Peter obeyed. Once released the angel left Peter and he went forth to those who knew he was imprisoned to speak how the Lord sent him an angel and he was delivered out of prison. After first they didn't believe it, thinking he was a ghost, crazy or maybe an imposter, but when they heard his voice they opened the door and saw him and were astonished. Peter told them to hold their peace and declared to them how the Lord delivered him. Peter then departed to share the good news of what the Lord had done with many others so that the Word of God grew and multiplied.

Just another example of how... when the Lord intervenes, no plans outside of God's will can hold us and nothing the enemy has planned for us shall prosper. It was not God's will that Peter remain in chains, but rather he be released for the glory of God and to spread the good news through his testimony to others.

For me... Easter reminds us, nothing harmful can destroy the hand of God over our lives. Even death's sting has no victory over us anymore... Jesus took back the keys to life and death permanently. We may fall, get dirty, broken, hopeless and totally worthless and yet... Jesus sees the truth of who we shall be AFTER He has His time of influence in our lives. He grants us ears to hear only Him and a heart that is soft and moldable to do His will and desire – changing us from the inside out to give Him glory and live a life laid down daily.

I am truly finding a lack of words to describe what the promise of Resurrection Sunday actually means to me personally. Its as if my mouth cannot describe all the thoughts in my heart worthy enough to explain the gift of Jesus making all things possible for life and renewal. I say possible because just because a gift is given, doesn't mean one accepts it... Jesus is a gift and sadly few say yes to Him in truth of the heart. He is not a get out of jail ticket, He Himself is the gift that keeps on giving, leaving you in a place of constant molding and purifying from anything that may taint with the remnants of death. And just like we read about Peter, all chains are broken with the dawn of light and we are released from the touches of sin and death. We become that walking testimony for the purposes of glorifying God. If He can change me... He can change anyone. If He can heal me, He most certainly can heal you too. All you have to do is believe and accept His gift in exchange of dying to self-daily – He does all the work, we just have to let Him.

It tells us in Isaiah 53 that Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities... He surely didn't deserve it considering He had no iniquity or transgressions of His own. It even states, He was chastised due to our wavering peace and by His stripes we are healed because like sheep we drift, going our own way instead of His. Without Jesus, there would be no hope for us or chance at redemption.

By His stripes we are HEALED... Made whole, hurts or defects are removed. Jesus heals the inward parts of us that do not always surface outwardly. In the Bible when it speaks of "healings" although it can include our sickness, that is not what the Lord focuses on the most. All flesh is weak and prone to illness, Jesus is concerned with the heart. Remember He said His desire is for us to be made whole by His influence in our lives. Healed. Complete in Him.

There is certainly a pattern we can observe in Holy Week... We went over that quite a bit last week during Palm Sunday. Towards the end of Holy Week, we see in the Bible how DARKNESS COMES, seeking DEATH, a time is declared where one is SET APART in a TOMB and finally because the Lord is Who He says He is... RESURRECTION prevails, death is destroyed. This pattern established by Jesus so long ago, we carry with us to this day. Every challenging situation we face, keeps the same trajectory while living victorious in Jesus.

One of my favorite quotes is... He is not here, He has risen... Just as He said He would.

I love all of it, but my most favorite part is... Just as He said He would. We may have darkness seeking to drown us and kill us or even feel as if we are dead to life stuck in a tomb within our own surroundings BUT... RESURRECTION DAY IS COMING. Even though we cannot see it, it is around the corner only to be revealed in God's timing... Death could not hold Jesus, torment cannot hold us... once delivered we too shall look back and say... I am not there anymore, Jesus raised me back to life... JUST AS HE SAID HE WOULD DO. He does not base His decision on fulfilling each promise to us on whether we believe Him or not... He just does as He does, resurrecting and renewing and saving those who need it the most... us, the broken, downhearted, trodden down, least of these who need saving and are searching for Him. Apart from Him we can do nothing, but once you fall in love with Him – you don't want to take one step without His guiding approval. Like a fish that would perish quickly outside of water, we too would come to nothing outside of abiding in Him. Jesus is as close as the air we breathe in a most precious way.

Another one of my favorites I want to share, surrounding the events of the Resurrection in the Bible... It is when the man hanging on the cross next to Jesus recognized Him as Lord and Savior, repented and asked for forgiveness for his sinful ways, which is just precious. But what I love, love the most is Jesus's response back to him and how Jesus [suffering such pain at time, took time for someone in need like this] and just how that sets Jesus clearly above all of humanity. This is something only Jesus would do I have no doubt. When our demands of perfection do not measure up, when we criticize ourselves for not being good enough, or times we compound guilt for not doing good enough works or any works at all for that matter, just all that self-condemnation we do to ourselves – we don't pray enough, we don't read the Bible enough, we don't witness enough or whatever the case maybe we use to earn our way into Heaven... In one short sentence... Jesus settles it all, once and for all and in a swift moment we are all on equal playing ground. Here is what Jesus said to this repentant sinner, soon to be saint who simply asked for Jesus to remember him... "Today you shall be with me in paradise." And that... cannot be added to or taken away from. Its simple but shaking at the same time. You mean this prisoner could go to Paradise to be with Jesus without doing one good work here on Earth? Yes. Without ever praying before? Yes. Without ever walking in faith as small as a mustard seed? Yes. Without converting one person to Christ? Yes. The list goes on... because that's our Jesus, confounding the wise and saving lost souls – not giving any consideration to religious ways, He granted this sinner the very same inheritance you and I will receive. And to me... and hopefully you too... that is

incredible and something to truly rejoice at... I cannot wait to meet that man when I get to Heaven – I try sometimes to imagine his joy and love for Jesus due to the contrast of his past to where he ended up. These were the last words Jesus spoke to a cry and perishing soul... “Today, you will be with Me in Paradise...” That’s our Jesus! There is truly no one like Him.

I love this season because it highlights some of the most important attributes of Jesus – His saving grace. It also brings to light the ways in which we do not always reflect His ways and heart... Like when Peter cut the ear off the soldier who tried to arrest Jesus and Jesus reprimanded Peter and put the ear back on the soldier and healed him. I can only imagine the offended hurt Peter felt following a moment he imagined was love for Jesus, he chose to lean upon his own understanding instead, getting a strong rebuke in the process, in that moment we learn very quickly, Jesus not only doesn’t have any enemies – but how He treats those who consider Him one. I am sure we all can relate to Peter, having been beaten with many stripes ourselves for leaning upon our own understanding in place of letting Jesus be our guide. Lord help us not to run ahead of you, but instead walk side by side with You while You lead the way.

Something else so very beautiful that came as a result of Jesus going to the cross and being raised from the dead, that we do not talk about that much is how the New Covenant replaced the old one. Because Jesus’s lives and raises us back to life by being born again... We are no longer under the old law, which was very harsh and extreme in many ways. The New Covenant established by Jesus enabled an everlasting agreement between God and humanity, should they receive Jesus as Lord in their lives, based on grace, faith, forgiveness and love. Rather than an adherence to Mosaic Law which placed demands, because of Jesus, we can receive the internal writing of God’s law upon our changed hearts as believers. There is only one way to the Father, which is through Jesus – He provided us a way to foster a direct relationship with our Father God.

Just a few key points about the New Covenant:

- Jesus serves as the mediator, meeting our only requirement to be cleansed of all sin. Receiving His sacrifice into our hearts cleanses us.
- We may enter into rest from our works, that always fall short anyway. Unlike the Old Covenant which is based on demanded law and self-righteousness, the New Covenant operates through divine grace, opening pathways to our personal relationship with the Lord.
- The New Covenant enables God to write His laws on believers’ minds and heart, fostering a personal connection and intimate relationship with the Lord rather than relying on external holiness.
- Most important is... The Comforter, the Holy Spirit is sent via the New Covenant to dwell within believers for the purpose of living a life fruitful and dedicated through obedience to the Lord. He guides us continually, enabling us to obey, repent and be pleasing in the sight of our Lord and Master.
- Jesus said this New Covenant is both permanent and more glorious because it is love based. He told us to love one another, just as He loves us.
- In the New Covenant all we owe is a debt of love. God has poured enough love into our hearts to repay that debt to every single person we engage with... both friend and foe are easy to love when loving with Jesus’s love instead of our own.
- Because of Jesus we look to Him for the role model of engagements we have here on Earth. Under the old it was more you pay for your mess ups. But with Jesus, it is shake it off, be truly sorry in the heart and keep walking in faith.
- A very, very long time ago, the Lord told me in my heart to... Gain wisdom from the Old, but walk out the New. Which is much easier said than done by the way. Our flesh wants to gravitate to holding our feet to the fire of the Old Covenant rather than dying to self, embracing the ways and will

of Jesus through a purification process. Flesh loves works, the spirit submits and is free to love. We have a little Mary/Martha thing going on at times battling within. But Mary chose the better part, she chose to lay at Jesus's feet, placing Him above the attention gleaned or flesh satisfaction of works. I don't know about you, but I want to be more like Mary and less like Martha, who was very frantic and offended while doing works – feeling as if she was going unnoticed without assistance, she held a grudge and grumbled. By observation Mary and Martha demonstrate the contrast between the Old and New Covenants in many ways.

- With the New Covenant Jesus is now the door to enter into Sabbath rest... and one big difference is how we have the blessing to rest in Him, continually – 24-7, no longer preparing days or hours for just one day like they did in the Old Covenant – purging, cleaning and getting everything in perfect order to go before the Lord... Now, we simply enter in through Jesus and then He purifies us, washing us clean. The Old Covenant encouraged the outside of the cup be spotless, while inwardly no purifying – but in the New Covenant we enter into perfect rest with Jesus and He makes us spotless without blemish or wrinkle. Major contrasts: Old – based on self, works, outward holiness, focused on one day a week as the day to be Holy and in commune with the Lord. New – resting upon Jesus for the works and cleansing, is daily and 24-7 He performs His holiness in and through us through constant communion with Him.
- In the New Covenant we are drawn continually into the holiness of God through a deep longing for truth found in God's word to instruct and lead us unto repentance. Again, the Old Covenant places demands in which none can receive – you break one law and by it you are marked for doom because no one but Jesus could keep the whole law to fulfill it.
- Jesus said... If you love Me, you will keep my commandments – changing the tide on why we obey, what was rule based in demands, was forever changed to be of the heart, a willing heart set to obey void of rebellion and full of love.

Father's Love Letter & Testimonies

We have just a couple testimonies this morning to go over... one from Wendy and one from our precious inmate David Campos. And then a small one of mine that is near and dear to my heart – The Father's Love Letter, which I am going to read to you all. Most of you are familiar with it, but I like to read it occasionally when feeling worthless to remind myself I do have a Father in Heaven Who cares, watches and has nothing but good planned for me and for you all too.

We know Jesus makes all things new and everything He touches is redeemed to life. *Isaiah 66:2 says - For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.*

We must be poor in spirit to receive the fullness of God with humility, realizing He is performing His Word throughout the Earth. Knowing this settles any fear within us. No need to tremble at Earthly things or events, just His Word.

He tells us not to lean upon our own understanding, but trust in the Lord in *Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall ^{to}direct your paths.*

Those who are running to and fro in fright and attempting to suck others into their perceived drama are leaning upon their own understanding of what is here, what is coming and what might cause their hearts to fail as they are more focused on what might come upon the Earth instead of acknowledging the Lord is in

control, directing our paths. He will never leave us or forsake or give us more than we can endure with Him. We must trust and obey Him in order we not panic, Jesus always makes a way of escape for His own every single time. He has never let us down nor will He.

*Isaiah 1:18-20 says - "Come now, and **let us reason together**," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

REASON TOGETHER... What are we discussing among ourselves? What are we sharing with people we meet or spend time with? Are we being Holy in all manner of conversation, edifying the Body with the Word of God? Or are we elevating evil influences, giving it way more power than it actually has? In this Chapter of Isaiah we read it is only those who are willing to be made white (ready for harvesting) and are obedient shall eat the GOOD of the land, but sadly those who refuse to eat only good and obey due to their own rebellion they shall be devoured by the sword – spoken out of the mouth of the Lord, He declares it and it shall come to pass. I am praying Jesus purify our hearts so that the words which flow out of our mouths are like living water freely given to those who thirst.

The Lord's Prayer & Communion

Some of you all had requested we take communion together. Which is fine. Honestly, I am sort of weird about it altogether, but am happy to initiate those who desire to partake in communion together while we are on air this Resurrection Sunday. For me... Partaking of Jesus in such a way is inward and intimate constant, over a particular set day and time. Yet, I realize many people find encouragement in the outward expression, very similar to baptism. And we all know I am not right on anything, likely including this. I will be the first to say, growing up Catholic – who's focus was more on communion than on Jesus most often – has left its mark on me. For some reason there is something within me holding me back a little because communing with Jesus is very sacred and precious.

So don't pay any attention to my ramblings on this... If you are being led to partake in communion today, by all means please do so freely, intimately between you and Jesus as I read in Mathew and The Lord's Prayer.

Mathew 26:26-29

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, ^[c]blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the ^[d]new covenant, which is shed for many for the ^[e]remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
[For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.]
Amen.*