

“He is Risen!”

When I was a child, I enjoyed dying eggs for Easter, as well as the ritual of hiding and finding them. Still, I always knew that, just like Christmas isn't really about Santa Claus, Easter meant a lot more than the secular trappings attached to the day. I'm not sure most kids *now* know the true meaning of Easter, though – or most adults, for that matter. So, here it is in a nutshell: Easter is the most important day on the Christian calendar, the day commemorating Jesus Christ's resurrection after being crucified, his victory on our behalf over the power of sin and death.

...At dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb... The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay... So the women... afraid yet filled with joy, ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly, Jesus met them... They... clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Mat.28:1-9)

The women, along with a host of others, had seen the crucifixion with their own eyes. So although Jesus had foretold his death and resurrection, even his friends and followers weren't really expecting to find the tomb empty that morning. But they did. They weren't expecting to meet their risen Lord. But they did. As the Son of God, nothing on earth had power over Jesus – not the Romans, not even death itself. Jesus went to the cross, not as a helpless victim, but by choice. As he said, “No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again” (John 10:18). And that's just what Jesus did; he laid down his life for us, and then he took it up again. It was all part of our loving God's plan that we should *not perish but have everlasting life* (Jn. 3:16).

The women were filled with joy that first Easter morning, the disciples spread the news, and 2000 years later millions still celebrate – celebrate something far more wonderful than colored eggs and chocolate bunnies. In fact, it's quite literally the most important event ever to occur on the face of the planet: that God's Son, after paying for our sins on the cross, defeated the ultimate enemy (death) by his glorious resurrection. Without it, we would have no hope. That's why today, throughout the world, Christians greet each other, saying, “He is risen!” He is risen indeed.

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