

LIVE AS EASTER PEOPLE!

We have just spent seven weeks celebrating Easter. It is my hope that what you will remember from this Easter season is this: Live as Easter people!

We began the season of Easter by reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus and how it is absolutely the most incredible thing that has ever happened! What makes it so incredible is not just that Jesus, who was dead, became alive again - as incredible as that is! The resurrection of Jesus is absolutely incredible because it changes the lives of people!

Just think of the stories we heard during this Easter season. We heard the story of Mary Magdalene and the other followers of Jesus on Easter morning and how they reacted when they discovered that Jesus was alive. They were filled with wonder! Awe! Astonishment! Surprise! Sheer delight! Worship and adoration!

We heard the story of Thomas and how the risen Jesus helped him believe. At first he didn't want to believe that Jesus was alive, but when he saw the marks of the crucifixion he cried out, "My Lord and my God!"

We heard the story of Paul and how the risen Jesus turned his life around. Before he met Jesus he was doing everything he could to stop people from following Christ. After he met Jesus he did everything he could to convince people to follow Jesus.

We heard the story of Peter and how the risen Jesus forgave him and gave him a new purpose in life.

We heard the story of Dorcas and how the risen Jesus worked through Peter to raise her up and give her a new life and then how many people started believing in Jesus because of what happened to her.

We heard the story of Lydia. When she heard about the death and resurrection of Jesus she came to faith and she and everyone in her household were baptized.

Today we heard the story about a jailer in Philippi. When Paul and Silas were thrown into prison they got a chance to tell the jailer about Jesus and the jailer came to faith and he and his whole family were baptized.

Pretty amazing! The resurrection of Jesus made a huge difference in the lives of these people. But these stories are just a tiny sample of what has happened down through the ages. And it is still happening today. The resurrection of Jesus is changing the lives of millions of people. It certainly has mine!

Today, as we come to the end of this Easter season, remember this: live as Easter people! Jesus is alive and he is with you. So live as Easter people! Live in the joy of having Christ as your constant companion. Live knowing that your past mistakes and failures are forgiven. Live confident that you have a secure future with God.

Live as Easter people! When the resurrection is the focus of your life, you are drawn closer to God. You grow in faith. You become more compassionate towards others. You want to spend time with other Christians. You want to share God's love with others.

When the resurrection is the focus of your life, you live in a different way. Instead of dwelling on your problems, you dwell on God's love. Instead of complaining about what is wrong, you give thanks for what is right. Instead of getting down on yourself, you marvel at what God is doing in your life. Instead of focusing on your aches and pains, you focus on the joy of living a new day.

Live as Easter people! That is what the New Testament book of Colossians tells us. You have been raised to life with Christ, says this book in chapter 3. You are now a new person. Christ lives in you. Christ is the one who gives meaning to your life.

Set your mind on the resurrection. Be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. Be tolerant of one another, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

You are part of the Body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace. So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts. And be grateful. Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God. Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.

Live as Easter people! Remember that. Write it down. Put it on your refrigerator. Tape it to your dashboard. Remember that Jesus is alive and that makes all the difference in the world.