



Easter Message 2017 From the Desk of the Presiding Bishop

Why should we care about Jesus' resurrection? Why should we care about something that happened so long ago? How does that affect our lives? Do we not have more pressing issues to deal with wars and rumors of war, budget deficits, job problems, marriage problems, children problems, roofs that leak, cars that need fixing.

The resurrection of Jesus is important, because it shows us that God cares. The resurrection is important, because it shows that God is willing to get involved in our lives, and is willing to help us, and is willing to get his hands dirty to help us.

We usually talk about the resurrection as important because it breaks the bonds of death, defeats the defeater, makes it possible for us to live eternally. That is true! But sometimes, when we are struggling with day to day problems, it's difficult to care about eternal life. Our immediate concern is finding a job, or getting out of debt, or getting our relationships in order, or helping our family members through difficult times.

If it is true that Jesus' resurrection prepares the way for eternal life, it is also true that Jesus' resurrection promises God's help in our everyday struggles. It promises that God cares about every detail of our lives.

After all, the Jesus who rose from the dead was the same Jesus who healed a leper, who gave a blind man his sight--who healed a centurion's servant. The Jesus who rose in splendor on Easter Sunday was the same Jesus who was born in a stable, the same Jesus who had no place to lay his head. The Jesus who rose in splendor on Easter Sunday was the same Jesus who got along well with sinners, but not so well with super-religious people. The Jesus who now lives in glory is the same Jesus who worked as a carpenter's helper in Nazareth, who trudged the dusty roads of Galilee, who endured nails in his hands and a sword in his side.

The scriptures tells us that Jesus was tempted just like we are (Hebrews [4:15](#)). He lived through a rough and complicated life, just as we do.

Jesus came down from heaven to live on this earth, not in the best of human circumstances, but in the most ordinary of circumstances.

If the way that Jesus lived seems difficult, consider the way that he died. It is difficult to imagine a death more terrible than crucifixion. Jesus' death demonstrated his determination to experience not just the ordinariness of our lives, but life at its worst, death at its worst.

Jesus' death on a cross is testimony that he is with us in every experience, every difficulty. The

resurrection is testimony that he can help us through every experience, every difficulty. It tells us that he has extraordinary power to help us and that he will use it to help us.

Many times we are only open to Jesus' help in the worst of circumstances, when we are really desperate, but Jesus wants to help us in every circumstance.

Jesus wants to be there for us in good times and bad, in big things and little, in worship on Sunday and at work on Monday. Jesus wants to help us to make good decisions. He wants to help shape our lives. Jesus wants to help us decide with whom we will choose to be in relationship. Jesus wants to help us raise our children. Jesus' resurrection promises God's help in every situation of life.

Jesus' resurrection promises God's help in death. The resurrection is God's promise of eternal life, which means more than living forever, eternal life means living now and forever in the presence of God.

In my years of ministry, I have seen people cope with the problems of life and the problem of death. I can tell you that resurrection faith makes a difference.

I have seen people of resurrection faith faced with difficulty. I am not going to tell you that lives are always simple. People like to have a faith foundation that steadies them when trouble hits. They know that God loves them. At their best, they remember to ask, "What would Jesus do?" When they act in faith, their faith helps them through crisis. It keeps them going. It keeps them from making things worse. It gives them hope. It assures them that God is with them and that God will lead them through the valleys into the sunshine beyond.

I have seen people without faith faced with difficulty. Too often that is like watching a boat drifting on the water, subject to every wave and current and helpless. You do not want to live like that. You want to live a life of Easter faith.

Easter is the first day of the rest of your life:

My prayer for you is that the Holy Spirit will touch your life here and now and give you an Easter faith.

My prayer is not that God will make your life easy, but that he will guide you with a steady hand through every difficulty.

My prayer is that, in life and in death, God will comfort you with his love and strengthen you with his presence.

My prayer is that your Easter faith will shine like a beacon on a mountaintop, reminding you from whence your help comes, because your help comes from the Lord. That is the Easter promise, the promise that your help comes from the Lord, that he can and will help.

Be blessed with Easter Joy!

In Jesus Christ The Resurrection and The Life,
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