

Do You Believe This?

Easter Sunday 2025 - Pastor Gary Combs - April 20, 2025 - John 11:25-26

INTRO: Good morning church! Happy Easter! Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed!* (Repeat). Do you believe this? Do you believe that Christ is risen? For it is upon the historical fact of the resurrected Christ that the entirety of Christianity rises or falls! It's the lynchpin of our faith. Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus? It may seem strange to modern ears, but that's what today is about, it's about believing in and worshiping the One who defeated sin, death, and the grave. Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed!* (Repeat). We believe this because it's true!

ILL: Yet, people believe a lot of things that turn out not to be true. Here's a few myths people believe:

- You Swallow 8 Spiders a Year in Your Sleep. NOPE. A total myth made up in a magazine article *to prove how easily misinformation spreads. And it worked. We all believed it.
- If You Swallow Watermelon Seeds, They'll Grow in Your Stomach. This is childhood trauma right here. Moms and grandmas used to say this like it was gospel. (Same with gum "staying in your stomach for 7 years." All lies!)
- Cracking Your Knuckles Causes Arthritis. Sorry, Grandma — science says no. It's just gas bubbles popping in the joint. Annoying? Maybe. Arthritis-causing? Nope.
- The Earth Is Flat. Still a thing! Despite photos from space, gravity, and, you know, science — flat earthers insist we live on a pancake with Antarctica acting as a giant icy wall around the edges.
- If You Touch a Toad, You'll Get Warts. Nope. Warts come from a virus, not amphibian friendships. Justice for the toads! Girls, you can keep looking for your prince!
- The Moon Landing Was Faked. This one's legendary. "Stanley Kubrick directed it!" they say. Never mind the hundreds of scientists, engineers, and actual astronauts. The shadows in the photos? "Too suspicious."
- Don't cross your eyes or they'll get stuck that way. No. Medically speaking, your eyes won't freeze in that position. Cross away my friends, but I wouldn't recommend crossing them during a job interview.
- The Easter bunny lays colored eggs. The myth of a magical bunny that lays colored eggs and delivers them to well-behaved kids originated in Germany. But I wouldn't recommend eating the little pellets that rabbits actually lay, no matter what color they are!

Trans: We believe in some funny things don't we? Especially as kids. But what we believe is no laughing matter when it's about life and death!

For instance you could say, "I don't believe in gravity. I can't see it, so I don't believe it." But if you miss a step while coming down a ladder, you'll find it doesn't matter what you believe, gravity will win.

It's not the quality or quantity of belief that determines whether something is true. It's the quality of the claim, whether it's proven, that makes something true, that makes it worth believing. This is especially important when the claim is about life and death. What we believe about such things really matters. What is the basis for your belief?

Need: On this day Easter Sunday we are reminded that Jesus claimed to be the Resurrection and the Life. He claimed that He was not only able to defeat death, but that He is the only way that we can receive this resurrection life. Where do you need this resurrection life today? Where are you experiencing death today? For there are many kinds of death: death of an unfulfilled dream; death of a relationship due to divorce or discord among former friends or family; and of course the finality of death itself. How do you face death? What do you believe about this?

Trans: Jesus not only claimed to be the resurrection and the life. He proved it! His resurrection is a fact and a matter of historical record. Do you believe this?

BODY: In the gospel of John 11:25-26, about two weeks before the first Easter Sunday, Jesus called Martha, whose brother Lazarus had died, to believe in Him as the resurrection and the life. We can experience resurrection life by believing in Jesus. How can we experience resurrection life by believing in Jesus? The text gives three truths for experiencing resurrection life by believing in Jesus.

Read text: John 11:25-26 (ESV) ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

HOW TO EXPERIENCE RESURRECTION LIFE IN JESUS:

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1. Look to the **PERSON**: True life is in Christ alone!

EXP: (25) Jesus was speaking to Martha. Her brother Lazarus had died four days before and was laid in a tomb. The comfort Jesus offers her isn't just a doctrine of resurrection, but that He *is* the resurrection. He doesn't just give life, He *is* life. True life isn't found in a principle, or a program, It's found in a Person, Jesus Christ!

"**I am**" (25) (Ἐγώ εἰμι, *ego eimi*) - Emphatic use of "I." Lit., "I, I am." Points to the name "Yahweh" revealed to Moses at the burning bush 'God said to Moses, "I am who I am." (Ex. 3:14). 7 "I am" statements in John: "I am the...bread of life...light of the world...door...good shepherd...way and the truth and the life...true vine. And of course, this one: "I am the resurrection and the life." He is "God of very God" (Nicene creed, 325 AD).

"**Resurrection**" (25) (ἀνάστασις, *anastasis*) - to stand up again; raised to life, resurrection.

"When Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life, He isn't offering an abstract idea—He's offering Himself." — Tim Keller

"**Life**" (25) (ζωή, *zōē*) - life, the absolute fullness of life. "Abundant life" (Jn. 10:10).

ARG: Christ as the *Logos* is the source of life.

John 1:1-4 (ESV) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Eternal life is only found in Christ Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 5:11-12 (ESV) ¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

ILL: Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5). He is the Source of life. Apart from Him, we are cut-off from life itself. A branch that is cut-off dries up and dies.

APP: Resurrection life isn't found in a religion, but in a relationship. It isn't found in a philosophy, but in a Person, the Person of Jesus Christ! Jesus says, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life!" Do you know Jesus today?

2. Recognize the **PENALTY**: Death wins without Jesus.

EXP: (25-26) Jesus said, "Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." This phrase implies a stark truth: Death wins without Jesus. For death is the penalty for sin. And we have all sinned (Rom. 3:23).

"**Believes**" (25-26, 3x) (πιστεύω, *pisteuō*) - to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, place confidence in, to trust. In Greek, the verb "believe" and the noun "faith" are the same word.

"**Die**" (25-26, 2x) (ἀποθνήσκω, *apothnēskō*) - to die, the natural death of man. Ecclesiastes reminds us that for everyone there is "A time to be born, and a time to die..." (Eccl. 3:2).

"**Live**" (25-26, 2x) (ζάω, *zaō*) - to live, breathe, be alive. The believer's body will die, yet shall their soul live and one day be raised again with a new and glorified body like Christ's.

ARG: The penalty for sin is death, but in Christ we have eternal life.

Romans 6:23 (ESV) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The truth is sin and death will win without Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:53-57 (NLT) ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. ⁵⁴ Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. ⁵⁷ But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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C. S. Lewis quote:

"Either Jesus bore your death, or you will. There is no neutral ground." — C.S. Lewis

ILL: **American evangelist, D. L. Moody famously said:** "Someday you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody of East Northfield is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now." He was also famous for saying:

"Born once, die twice; born twice, die once." — D. L. Moody

D.L. Moody's reported last words are both powerful and deeply moving. As he lay dying in 1899, he is said to have declared: "Earth recedes, heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go." Then, after a pause, he reportedly said: "This is my triumph; this is my coronation day! I have been looking forward to it for years." And finally, to his children standing near: "If this is death, it is not bad... it is glorious!"

APP: Whoever believes in Jesus, though he die, yet shall he live! Death wins without Jesus, but with Jesus death has lost its sting. In Jesus, God gives us the victory over sin and death!

3. Believe the **PROMISE**: Whoever believes in Jesus never dies.

EXP: (26) Jesus says, "Everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." This is the incredible promise of eternal, unbreakable, resurrection life—not just survival after death, but life that defeats death.

"**Everyone**" (26) - All who what? Live and believe in Jesus! Everyone surely includes you.

"**Never die**" (26) (μή, mē) - no, not, never. This speaks of eternal life. Whoever Christ raises lives forever.

"**Do you believe this**" (26) - This is the moment of decision. Faith is not just intellectual agreement, it's personal trust. Jesus asked Martha and He asks us to believe in Him.

ARG: **All who believe in Jesus will be raised to eternal life:**

John 6:40 (ESV) For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

ILL: **How did Martha respond to Jesus' question?**

John 11:27 (ESV) She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

Martha affirmed His messiahship ("Christ"), His divinity ("Son of God"), and His fulfillment of Jewish expectations ("who is coming into the world"). It's a beautiful verbal confession, but as Jesus approached the tomb of Lazarus, Martha attempts to restrain Him saying, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days" (39). That's when we realize she didn't really answer His question. Jesus and Martha were talking past each other. When faced with the finality of death, she didn't really believe in Jesus in the way He had revealed Himself. But soon, she would. For when Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth" (43), she believed and so did those who had "seen what He did" (45). When the Pharisees and the Council heard they said, "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him" (48). So they plotted to kill Him. And only a week later, they turned Him over to the Romans to be crucified, yet on the third day He arose!

CONCLUSION: Today, Jesus is still asking, "Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life?" As the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans:

Romans 10:9 (NIV) If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Do you believe this? (1) Have you believed in the PERSON of Christ as the only Source of Life? (2) Do recognize that PENALTY of sin and death apart from faith in Jesus? (3) Do you believe the PROMISE of eternal life in Jesus?

Let's pray.