

EASTER @ THE REC

This is Jesus: John 19-21

- For those that know me, know that I am a pretty avid sports fan to put it lightly. However, even in the midst of my passion for my sports teams, I am not a big trash talker.
 - A lot of people don't believe that coming from a die hard Philadelphia fan, but it's true. Now, the reason I don't do much trash talking, isn't because I want to be respectful, a good sportsman, or all pastoral in my fandom or anything like that.
 - The real reason I don't trash talk is because I am terrified of the jinx. In the words of the great theologian, Michael Scott, "I'm not superstitious, but I am a little-stitious."
 - In my mind, if I talk any trash before a game is played, I will have already made my team lose. I can't do it!
- So it astounds me, some of the sports fans that I see that talk so much trash and make all of these bold predictions before a game is even played! I don't have that type of boldness!
 - What really gets me is some of these athletes that have the audacity to make those big claims themselves. And what is really incredible are the one's who back it up.
 - Probably one of the most famous trash talkers in sports was Larry Bird. Larry was always mouthing off to other teams, but he also was always backing it up. Larry known for calling his shots.
 - One time he was playing his biggest rival, the Lakers. It was a 1 or 2 point game, Lakers were up, and there was time for one more play. The Lakers draw up their defense, and when they break the huddle, Larry is right there waiting for them. He then tells their entire team, "I'm going to stand over there in that corner, they're going to set a screen for me,

I'm going to curl over the screen, catch the ball, and end the game.”

- HE TOLD THEM THE ACTUALLY PLAY THEY WERE GOING TO RUN
- And then he actually does it! He goes to the corner, curls over the screen, catches the ball, shoots the shot, ends the game...
- Probably one of the most mind boggling shots Larry Bird ever called was against the Atlanta Hawks. That game Larry was in the zone, scored 60 points that game. And during the game he kept telling the Hawks bench what he was going to do, and the different shots he was going to take.
- And the Hawks bench can't help but just enjoy the show.
- At one point, he turns to the guys on the bench, and He says, “Rainbow. Trainers lap.”
 - Then proceeded to get the ball, turns and shoots a high arcing-fade-a-way-rainbow

jump shot, and falls into the trainers lap on the bench as the shot goes in.

- Can you imagine having that much confidence, boldness, and skill to be able to call your shot like that? AND PULL IT OFF??
- Now the reason I share that, is because NO ONE was better at calling their shot than Jesus. And no one ever called a bigger shot than the one Jesus called.
- Even when they tried to defend it, they couldn't stop it.
- 3 times, in each of the first 3 Gospels, Jesus predicts His death, AND His resurrection.
- One is found in Luke 18 when he writes, “And taking the twelve, He said to them, **“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For He will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging Him, they will kill**

Him, and on the third day He will rise.”

-Luke 18:31-33 (ESV)

- Sure enough, after Jesus' 6 completely unjust trials, He gets a sentence He does not deserve, and John chapter 19 begins with saying, ***“Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed Him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck Him with their hands.” John 19:1-3 (ESV)***
- Even though Pilate continued to try and reason with the people to let Jesus live, their voices prevailed, and Pilate let it happen for fear of losing his job if a riot were to occur.
- So they had Jesus carry His own cross up a hill, they laid Him upon it, and drove railroad tie sized nails in through His wrists and His feet, and hung Him up on the most public street corner in town, in between two common thieves.

- While the time passed, the Roman soldiers made a game of it and decided to gamble over His articles of clothing...seeing that He was famous and all
- So Jesus hung there, for about 6 hours, slowly suffocating to death on His own blood...
- ***“After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to His mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished,” and He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit.” -John 19:28-30 (ESV)***
- *No one took Jesus' life..HE GAVE IT*
 - Jesus was clear about this when 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 I have***

authority to take it up again...” John 10:18 (ESV)

- *No one took Jesus' life..HE GAVE IT*

- In chapter 7 they didn't like His teaching in the Temple and it says ***“Then they tried to seize Him. Yet no one laid a hand on Him because His hour had not yet come.” John 7: 30 (CSB)***

- *No one took Jesus' life..HE GAVE IT*

- In Luke 4, it says, ***“All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took Him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw Him off the cliff. But He walked right through the crowd and went on His way.” -Luke 4:28-30 (NIV)***

- *No one took Jesus' life..HE GAVE IT*

- And finally, like we saw last week, whenever they come to arrest Jesus in the garden,

Jesus faces the squadron of soldiers head on, He asks them who they are seeking, they say, “Jesus of Nazareth...” ***“When Jesus said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.” -John 18:6 (ESV)***

- *No one took Jesus' life..HE GAVE IT*

- And why did He give it? What did Jesus mean when He was on the cross and said, “IT IS FINISHED??” What is finished??
 - The week before last we were having some trouble with our HVAC unit at the house. And at first it seemed that it was just going to need some minor repairs, but after having a couple of different professionals look at it...it turned out the entire unit was going to be replaced
 - Now I'm going to be honest. We don't have that kind of cash on hand to replace an entire HVAC system for a house
 - But what they did was set us up with two year interest free payments. So we have

some time. Now we can choose to just make the minimal payments on it from here on out, but eventually there's going to be a much bigger bill that's going to come due

- You see, when sin entered into the world, it put a charge against us on our account. And it's a bill that none of us can afford. Paul says that the WAGES of sin is death. The O.T. stated that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission or payment for sin
- So God had set up a temporary system in which people could sacrifice a spotless animal to make an atonement for the sin in their lives every so often. But that only served as minimum payments. And eventually the much bigger bill was going to come due, and someone was going to have to pay for it
- But John tells us that Because God SO LOVED THE WORLD, He sent Jesus, His one and only Perfect and Spotless Son. And He

willingly GAVE HIMSELF UP to be that last and final sacrifice.

- And as He shed His Blood on that cross, He said IT IS FINISHED, THE BILL HAS BEEN PAID, THE DEBT HAS BEEN WIPED CLEAN, THERE IS NO FURTHER PAYMENT REQUIRED!
- But He didn't stop there! That's not the whole play! When He called His shot, He didn't just predict His death, but also His Victory over death.
- He predicted He would Rise Again.
- And it was so widely known that He called this shot, because when He was buried, the religious leaders had guards set up at the tomb and sealed it, just to make sure no one would try and fake a resurrection and prove Him right.
- But Matthew 28 tells us, ***"After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning... There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended***

from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men. The angel told the women, “Don’t be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. For He has risen, just as He said.” -Matthew 28:1-6 (CSB)

- Now I don't know about you, but if this is true, and there's a Man who claimed to be God in flesh, and to prove it, said He was going to be brutally murdered, for the sake of other people, but then raise Himself back up from the dead...and then DOES IT?? Well I'm inclined to follow that Guy.
- Now I don't just believe this because I read about it in a book. But these are actual eye-witness accounts of people actually seeing this happen.
- John says, “Hey I'm a witness to this...”

- John speaking of Himself in John 19:35 says, ***“He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.” -John 19:35 (ESV)***
- Again in chapter 21 he ends his gospel by saying, ***“This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” -John 21:24-25 (ESV)***
- He says, WE know this testimony is true... who's the WE here?
- Well Paul gives us a list in 1 Corinthians 15, ***“For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third***

day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then He appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, He also appeared to me.” - 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV)

- This is not just a couple of people claiming they might have saw something....these are hundreds and hundreds of personal eye witnesses that KNOW this to be true because they saw it
- And the WAY He appeared to some of these people can be so encouraging and uplifting for us today.
- Because they give us insight into who Jesus is, and Who He wants to be for you...if you allow Him to.

- We see the first person He appeared to was Mary Magdalene.
- Now John has mentioned Mary a number of times in His Gospel, she was one of Lazarus' sisters who sent word to Jesus that their brother was sick and Jesus came and resurrected Him from the dead.
 - She was so overcome with gratitude that she washed Jesus' feet at dinner that night with \$50k perfume
- Luke tells us a story about whenever Jesus was visiting them and her sister Martha was in the kitchen and serving everyone and got frustrated because Mary wasn't helping her. But rather Mary was just sitting at Jesus' feet soaking in every word that He had to say
- And Matthew tells us that when Jesus first met Mary, she was possessed by 7 demons and Jesus delivered her from that. And she followed Jesus as closely as she could ever since.

- I once heard a testimony from a woman who had been delivered from demon possession and she said once she was delivered, she felt like 90% of her body was missing because she had lived with it for so long.
- Now, if that is true, you can imagine how Mary would have felt after being delivered from 7. And the only option for her to fill that emptiness was Jesus
- And that's exactly what Jesus does for us
- **JESUS FILLS THE EMPTY**
- I firmly believe that every human being is born with a God-sized hole in our lives.
 - And we do everything we can to try and fill that hole.
 - We turn to drugs, sex, alcohol
 - But maybe nothing even that drastic...we can turn to success, money, business, academics, relationships, parenthood, doing good things, the list could go on.
- And so many of us go so long trying desperately to find whatever that thing is that is going to fill us.
 - But none of those things can ever fulfill you, even the inherently good things. And they become unhealthy when we put the pressure on those things to fulfill us.
 - The only One that can fulfill your life is the One that gave you life in the first place. The One who's very image you were created in. You were made to live in relationship with God and you will never find fulfillment in your life until that relationship is right.
- Now Mary had that relationship, Jesus was her everything. But she laid there at the foot of the cross while her everything was being taken away.
- And the very first chance that she gets, as soon as dawn broke the morning after the sabbath she made her way to Jesus' tomb, she was going to make sure His burial was as perfect as it could be

- She just wanted to do whatever she could just to feel a little close to Him again...but when she gets there, the body is gone!
- And she's not thinking that He rose from the dead, she's thinking that someone took His body away...its like her everything is being taken all over again and even further away!
- And chapter 20 John writes, ***"But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."***
-John 20:11-13 (ESV)
- She is so distraught that seeing two angels in Jesus' tomb doesn't even phase her!
- But then in verse 14 it goes on to say, ***"Having said this, she turned around***

and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to Him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher)." John 20:14-16 (ESV)

- You know studies show that the most beautiful sound to a persons ear is the sound of their own name from a loved one.
- Jesus said to her, ***"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that He had said these things to her."*** -John 20:17-18 (ESV)

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- This is how GOOD Jesus is, in the midst of working out the eternal and spiritual ramifications for our salvation, He takes a time out to go see Mary and make sure she's ok. To give her all of her fulfillment back.
- And Jesus didn't just let her know that He was there, but then He gives her a mission.
- She is essentially the very first Christian, the first to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, and she is essentially the first evangelist giving the first Gospel message post resurrection.
- Mary's life has NEVER been so full
- So she goes to tell the disciples what she saw and what Jesus had said to her...and later that evening, they're gathered together in a locked room, in fear that the Jews want to kill them too
- And Jesus appears right in the middle of the room He says, "Peace be with you,"... *"It's ok, don't be afraid, it's Me, I'm alive!"* He shows them the scars from the nails in His hands and feet and the spear that pierced His side
- And He spends some time giving them their fulfillment and purpose back and everyone's all excited and mind blown!
- Well everyone expect one. Because while all of this was going on, Thomas had gone on a chic-fil-a run and missed it!
 - And when he comes back, they're like *"Thomas! You're not gonna believe it! Jesus was here! We spoke to Him! He's alive! We even saw the scars from the cross! He's BACK!!"*
 - Thomas is like, *"You kidding me??"*
 - Now I think Thomas gets a bad wrap... because I don't see him as doubting Thomas, but I just think He's frustrated. I think Thomas just feels left out.
 - He's gotta be thinking, *"He's going to appear to everyone except me??" "He's gonna wait until I'm outa the room to see everyone?? NO! Unless I see the scars, and actually touch Him, I'm not gonna believe!"*

- So Jesus makes Thomas sweat it out for a little over a week. Verse 26 says, ***“Eight days later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” Thomas answered Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” -John 20: 26-29 (ESV)***
- You know, one of the things that really sticks out to me about this, is that:
 - **JESUS SHOWS HIS SCARS**
 - I think there’s got to be a lesson in that.
- For one reason or another we have created this church culture and this southern Bible Belt mindset, where we’re supposed to pretend that we have these cookie cutter lives, and we got all our stuff together, everything is ok at home, we don’t struggle, we’re not hurting- we’re GOOD!
 - There is no redemptive power in putting on a church face,
 - When we pretend like everything is squeaky-clean we rob the Gospel message of its power!
- Jesus didn’t hide His scars, He didn’t pretend that they didn’t happen, He didn’t let it embarrass Him, He didn’t change the conversation saying, *“that was just too difficult of an experience, I don’t want to talk about it.”*
 - He took the most painful experience that He endured and used it to show His greatest power and glory
- What if, we were able to consider that some of the darkest and most painful experiences in

our lives could be a catalyst for the greatest power in our lives

- God loves to take what the enemy means for evil and turn it for good
 - The cross was supposed to be a symbol of shame, death, defeat, and embarrassment, BUT Jesus turned it into a symbol of Victory, Power, Hope, and Life
 - And He can do the same for your scars, He didn't hide His, you don't have to hide yours
 - Only God can take the tragedy of your life and turn it into a powerful testimony that strengthens you and the people around you...
- Scars may be proof that I have been hurt, but scars are also proof that I have been healed
- You see Jesus doesn't erase the past, but He can bring power to it
- So first and foremost, we bear our scars before God. We get honest with Him about the hurt and pain that we've experienced! We express

the frustration and confusion we have surrounding it.

- And the more we intentionally do that, the more and more He brings us through the Healing process and He strengthens those wounds and He showers us with His love and acceptance gives us more of an eternal perspective
- And He brings us to the point where we can openly share our experiences so God can use them to help bring healing to others who go through something similar
- All because of the Goodness and the Presence of Jesus...By HIS Wounds, you are Healed.
- You don't have to hide your scars, you don't have to go it alone, In fact, Paul tells us that the way we fulfill the law of Christ is if we carry, or bear one another's burdens together.
- Because of the Resurrection, Jesus shows us that He brings Healing, and He also brings Restoration.

- And we see in Jesus' third appearance that He takes the time to restore Peter, who at this point would have been filled with regret.

- **JESUS RESTORES THE REGRETFUL**

- Now I want to make the distinction between Regret and Scars

- Because scars, in the context we're talking, scars are something that has happened to you

- Regret is something that you've done

- *Scars are something that has happened to you that is outside of your control, like accidents, diseases, someone sinning against you*

- *Regret is something that's happened in which you have no one to blame but yourself*

- And I want to make that distinction, because a lot of people, especially now a days want to make them one in the same

- And the enemy wants that, because the enemy wants you to blame yourself for

something that's not your fault, and they want you to blame other people for what is your fault

- And in doing so we become stuck with no healthy way out or healthy way to grow

- But Jesus wants to set you free from the condemnation of both

- We've already dealt with the scars, now we're going to see how Jesus deals with regret.

- You see Peter has been beating Himself up. And he has no one to blame but himself.

- Because the last time that He was with Jesus, he made this bold declaration "**Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.**" Then He said, "**I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.**"
-Luke 22 :33-34 (ESV)

- Peter's thinking, "Yea right, not me!"

- But then a few hours later, the mob come to arrest Jesus
- Peter is in panic mode now, things aren't going according to what he thought the plan was
 - So he follows from a distance as they lead Jesus away
 - He gets himself smuggled into the court of the high priest while Jesus is on trial
- When he goes into the courtyard, there's a fire pit going, so he goes and sits down around the fire
 - Servant girl looks at him closely, "This is one of the guys that was with that Jesus that was arrested."
 - "Woman, I do not know Him"
 - A little later, a guy says "Yea, you were one of those disciple"
 - "Man, No I'm not"
- An hour later, someone else say, "This guy is a Galilean, he was DEFINITELY with Jesus!"
- ***"But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter." -Luke 22:60-61 (ESV)***
 - I can only imagine the sickening feeling that he got in his stomach when he realized what he had done...Verse 62 says he wept bitterly
- He had served Jesus faithfully and boldly for three years and now when times were most crucial he completely failed
- This failure would hang over him, throughout Jesus' crucifixion, even when Jesus rose and he ran to the empty tomb, even when he saw Him appear in the middle of a closed room, Peter still had this sense of failure hanging over him
- At the beginning of John chapter 21, Peter is sitting on the beach soaking in regret, and does what we all are tempted to do within these moments

- He says, "I'm going fishing"...He's going back to what he did before following Jesus. He was going back to something he knew he was good at and could handle on his own
 - But then he gets out there, fishing all night, catches nothing
- Morning came, they're still empty handed and they hear a guy from the shore yell to them
 - "Hey! You guys got any fish!"
 - Frustrated Peter... "No..."
 - "Try casting the net on the right side!"
 - In their frustration, they cast the net on the right side...so many fish
- John says "Its Jesus!"
- Peter takes off swimming
- He gets to Jesus, and he has a fire going on the beach, and he tells Peter and the guys to come have breakfast
 - The last time Peter was around a fire...

- Its almost as if Jesus is recreating the scene
- **"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"**
 - Peter is grieved because He knows that Jesus knows that he denied Him 3 times.
 - It hasn't been talked about, but they know
- **and he said to Him, "Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep." -John 21:15-17 (ESV)**

- Jesus wants Peter to confront his failure, but also cover his failure
 - 3 opportunities to tell Jesus he loves Him
 - 3 commands to take care of His people
 - And this was the third time He appeared to the disciples after he rose from the dead
- God is a God of redemption, not guilt
- *Jesus didn't do this because He wanted Peter to wallow in His regret, or make up for His mistakes.*
- *Jesus did this because He knew that Peter would have been beating himself up and He wanted to give Peter a sense of satisfaction, deliverance, and forgiveness. Jesus didn't just say, "forget about it, I forgive you." Jesus gave Peter a mission, He gave Peter responsibility, He gave Peter His trust.*
- Romans 8:1 says there is NO CONDEMNATION for those in Christ Jesus.
- He restores it all!

- ***"Though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again" -Proverbs 24:16***
 - Seven is the number of perfection or completeness
 - "You can completely fall or make a complete mess of your life, but because of the righteousness of Jesus, you can rise again"
- There is no failure that He can't forgive
- There is no doubt that He can't demolish
- There is no chain He can't break
- No pain that He can't ease
- It doesn't matter what kind of scars, insecurities, weaknesses, or regrets you may have...He can bring power and restoration to it all!
 - We see it all throughout the Bible
- *Abraham was too old to have a child; God made Him a Father of millions*

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- *Moses had a speech impediment; God used him to be the voice of a nation*
- *Joseph was sold as a slave; God used him to save a Kingdom*
- *Gideon was scared, hiding in a cellar; God called him a mighty man of valor*
- *God took David's broken family; and from it produced was the wisest man who ever lived*
- *Paul hated Jesus and persecuted the church; then he met Jesus and started planting churches*
- *Peter denied Jesus 3 times; 50 days later he would boldly proclaim Jesus and 3000 would get saved*