

# Greetings from Ceresco Baptist Church!

Ceresco Messenger, April 2020

**In this Easter message, Will Graham explains how Christ's experience of betrayal at the cross can give you strength for your own pain and hardship.**

As we consider Christ's death and resurrection—His perfect sacrifice and His victory over sin and the grave—we naturally focus on the unbearable physical pain Jesus endured on our behalf. However, this Easter I want you to consider a different kind of suffering: the emotional pain Jesus experienced as those who were closest to Him turned their backs.

Jesus personally chose 12 disciples whom He poured Himself into. They were His best friends; His "inner circle." They surrounded Him, traveled with Him, learned from Him and served in His ministry. Jesus loved them, and yet He knew—long before they did, in fact—that a couple of these men would publicly betray Him.

Judas, of course, is the one that comes instantly to mind. We're told in Luke 22 that "Satan entered into Judas..." (ESV). John 13:2 says "the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him" (ESV). Judas went to the chief priests and officers, accepted a payment from them and then betrayed Jesus into their hands.

Judas' treachery was the ultimate betrayal, directly resulting in Jesus' trial and the agony of the cross. But I wonder if the second betrayal might not have hurt just as much as the first.

Along with James and John, Peter was one of Jesus' closest and dearest friends. When Jesus was being arrested in the garden, Peter violently defended Him by attacking the high priest's servant. (While this earned Peter a rebuke from Jesus, it also showed that he was no coward and he was willing to defend Christ to the death.)

Given this, Peter's denial of Jesus must have stung deeply. Literally at the same moment that Jesus was being beaten and ridiculed (Mark 14:65), Peter was busy distancing himself from Christ (Mark 14:66-72). Three times people approached Peter to ask him if he was associated with Jesus, and three times Peter denied Him, even going so far as to "invoke a curse on himself and to swear, 'I do not know this man of whom you speak'" (Mark 14:71, ESV).

At a time when Jesus was being accused and beaten, His friends turned their backs on Him. What emotional pain this must have caused, even as Jesus knew it was coming and understood that it had to be!

Maybe you're reading this and it sounds a little too familiar. Maybe you have friends or family members who have turned their backs on you, or perhaps—like Judas—they were instrumental in causing the suffering you are now enduring. Maybe you're struggling through pain and despair, and the people you thought you could depend on have disappeared. Bodily pain hurts physically, but emotional pain slices directly to your soul.

My friends, I'm here to tell you that people will let you down. People will turn their backs on you and cause you pain. But here's the key—Jesus was forsaken, betrayed and crucified, but He conquered all of that! People are imperfect, but Christ is risen and will not let you down!

The Bible tells us not to put our faith into men or princes. Instead, this Easter place your eternity in the One who endured scorn, pain, and yes, betrayal from His friends, so that you may have a hope that extends far beyond the pitfalls and pains of this world.

## Psalm 23 : The North American Plains Indian Version

*From their first encounters with Christian missionaries, the North American Plains Indians used universal sign language to communicate Psalm 23 among tribes who spoke different oral languages. In 1894, Isabel Crawford, a Baptist missionary to the Kiowa Indians in Oklahoma, translated the Sign Version into literal English. Here is the Psalm 23 translation:*

The Great Father above is a shepherd Chief.

I am His and with Him I want not.

He throws out to me a rope and the name of the rope is love and

He draws me to where the grass is green and the water not dangerous,  
and I eat and lie down and am satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down but

He lifts me up again and draws me into a good road.

His name is WONDERFUL.

Sometime, it may be very soon, it may be a long, long time.

He will draw me into a valley. It is dark there, but I'll be afraid not,

for it is in between those mountains that the Shepherd Christ will meet me  
and the hunger that I have in my heart all through this life will be satisfied.

He gives me a staff to lean upon.

He spreads a table before me with all kinds of foods.

He puts His hand upon my head and all the "tired" is gone.

My cup He fills till it runs over.

What I tell is true. I lie not.

These roads that are "away ahead" will stay with me through this life and after;

and afterwards I will go to live in the great house and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.

~Isabel Crawford (Missionary to the Indians of the plains)



Kiowa Indian Camp

## Easter Canceled? Not on Your Life! By Max Lucado

There has been much discussion recently over what to believe. Are the coronavirus numbers accurate? Are the reports from other countries dependable? Dare we be optimistic about treatments and vaccines?

Like you, I've struggled to separate caution from overreaction.

There was one headline, however, that we can quickly discard. Don't believe it. Don't fall for it. The message just ain't true. Here it is: "Easter Canceled." The article detailed the sad reality that most church sanctuaries will be closed this coming Sunday. Hence, the announcement, "Easter Canceled."

Hence, my reply, "Not on your life, friend."

Easter cannot be canceled. The church doors might be closed, but the promise is alive and well. What the angel said on the first Easter, he says still.

"He is not here. He is risen from the dead as he said he would" ([Matthew 28:6](#)).

It was Sunday morning after the Friday execution. Jesus' final breath had sucked the air out of the universe. As his body lay breathless in the grave, no one was placing bets on a resurrection.

His enemies were satisfied with their work. They raised a toast to a dead Jesus. Their only concern was those pesky disciples. The religious leaders made this request of Pilate, "So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead" ([Matthew 27:64](#)).

No concern was necessary. The disciples were at meltdown. When Jesus was arrested, "All the disciples forsook Him and fled" ([Matthew 26:56](#)). They cowered in Jerusalem's cupboards and corners for fear of the cross that bore their name.

No one dreamed of a Sunday morning miracle. Peter didn't ask John, "What will you say when you see Jesus?" Mary didn't ponder, "How will he appear?" They didn't encourage each other with quotes of his promised return. They could have. At least four times Jesus [said words like these](#):

"The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." You'd think someone would mention this prophecy and do the math. "Hmm, he died yesterday, today is the second day. He promised to rise on the third day. Tomorrow is the third day... Friends, I think we better wake up early tomorrow."

But Saturday saw no such plans. On Saturday, the enemy had won, courage was gone, and hope caught the last train to the coast. On Sunday, the women went to the tomb to embalm Christ, not talk to him. But then they saw and heard the angel.

"He has risen." Three words in English. Just one in Greek. *Egerthe*. So much rests on the validity of this one word. If it is false, then the whole of Christianity collapses like a poorly-told joke. Yet, if it is true, then God's story has turned your final chapter into a preface. *Egerthe!* He has risen! Not risen from sleep. Not risen from confusion. Not risen from stupor or slumber. Not spiritually raised from the dead, physically raised. The women and disciples didn't see a phantom or experience a sentiment. They saw Jesus "in the flesh." "It is I myself!" ([Luke 24:39 NIV](#)), he assured them.

The Emmaus-bound disciples thought Jesus was a fellow pilgrim. His feet touched the ground. His hands touched the bread. Mary mistook him for a gardener. Thomas touched his wounds. The disciples ate fish that he cooked. The resurrected Christ did physical deeds in a physical body. "I am not a ghost" ([Luke 24:39 NLT](#)), he assured. "Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" ([Luke 24:39 NKJV](#)).

The bodily resurrection means everything. If Jesus lives on only in spirit and deeds, he is but one of a thousand dead heroes. But if he lives on in flesh and bone, he is the King who pressed his heel against the head of death's snake. What he did with his own grave, he promises to do with yours: empty it.

Entrust your life and your death to the Hero of Easter. Believe in the One who declared: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" ([John 11:25-26 NIV](#)).

Winston Churchill did. The prime minister planned his own funeral. [According to](#) his instructions, two buglers were positioned high in the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. At the conclusion of the service, the first one played "Taps," the signal of a day completed. Immediately thereafter, with the sounds of the first song still ringing in the air, the second bugler played "Reveille," the song of a day begun. Appropriate song. Death is no pit, but a passageway; not a crisis, but a corner turn.

Dominion of the Grim Reaper? No. Territory of the Soul Keeper, who will someday announce, "Your dead will live, your corpses will get to their feet. All you dead and buried, wake up! Sing! Your dew is morning dew catching the first rays of sun, the earth bursting with life, giving birth to the dead" ([Isaiah 26:19 MSG](#)).

**Church buildings will be vacant this Sunday. That is true. But since the tomb of Christ is vacant, Easter cannot be canceled. Ever.**



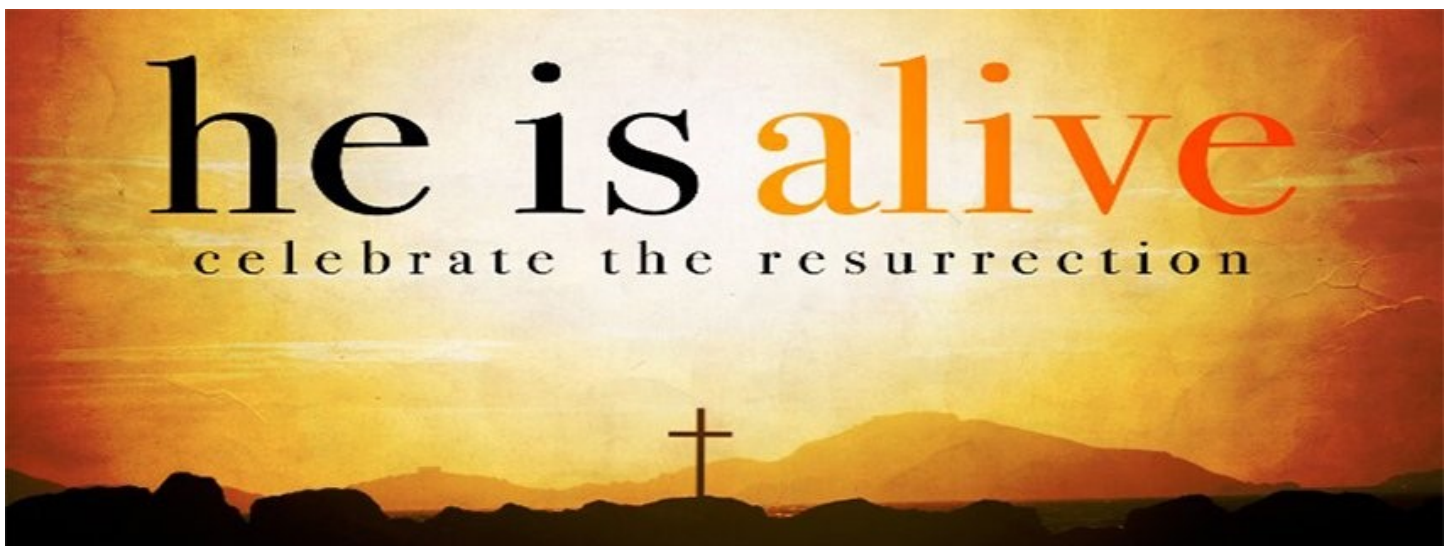


- Apr 1 Emily Biljum
- Apr 6 Zane Ivey
- Apr 16 Darlene Anthony
- Apr 16 Charity Gary
- Apr 30 Katherine Rogers
- May 3 Valerie Kibby
- May 3 Stephen Phelps
- May 5 Jayme Biljum
- May 5 Alex Finch
- May 15 Marcy Bonney
- May 24 Patricia Ivey
- May 25 Diane Biljum
- May 25 Melissa Boysen
- May 26 Shawn Skinner

- Apr 4 Rick & Dawn Frey
- Apr 5 Roger & Joy Sommers
- May 2 Scott & Melissa Boysen
- May 21 Jason & Emily Ivey

Awake, thou wintry earth  
 Fling off thy sadness!  
 Fair vernal flowers,  
 Laugh forth  
 Your ancient gladness!  
 Christ is risen.  
 — Thomas Blackburn

**EASTER IS GOING TO LOOK VERY DIFFERENT FOR MOST OF US THIS YEAR** – but in the midst of historic uncertainty, the hope and power of Christ’s resurrection shines even brighter. As you and your family prepare to celebrate Easter at home this year, lift your hearts to our risen Savior, who said, *“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore”* (Revelation 1:17-18, ESV).



# April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
<p>Quarantine Calendar We miss you all! Praying we can soon worship together!</p>						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Palm Sunday				Maundy Thursday	Good Friday	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Easter Sunday He is RISEN! Alleluia!						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	May 1	May 2
			Information for the May Messenger due today by noon			

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# HOLY WEEK

