



4 Ways to Spread the Word: Jesus Is Risen

by Jay Martin @ LifeTeen blog¹

From yelling hallelujah, to chocolate bunnies, to egg hunts, to reuniting with whatever you fasted from during Lent, Easter is easily one of my favorite times of the year.

But to find the greatest gift of Easter, you'll have to put down your basket and all that yummy, sugary stuff that fills you up (looking at you Peeps) and instead run to something empty- a tomb where the body of Jesus, the King of the Jews, was laid to rest.

He Is Risen

We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus loud and proud every Easter Sunday not only because it begins the most important liturgical time of the year, but because His resurrection is the BOOM SHAKA LAKA of our Christian faith and the most pivotal moment in human history. 1 Corinthians 15:14 says that **“If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, is your faith.”**

¹ <https://lifeteen.com/blog/4-ways-to-spread-the-word-jesus-is-risen/>

This is the classic “all-or-nothing” decision we have to make with Jesus. He either rose from the dead, or He didn’t; there’s no in-between. **We either have to believe that He gave His life for us on the cross and then came back to life, or we have to cast off the whole resurrection story as bologna.**

The problem with that second part is that incredibly, there are plenty of logical reasons to believe that Jesus actually did rise from the dead. Jesus didn’t just tiptoe out of the tomb and play hide-and-go-seek first the kingdom of heaven; He rolled back that stone all the way and proceeded to make His resurrected presence known to hundreds over the next few weeks.

The resurrection is the slam-dunk off the alley-oop that Jesus passed to Himself, the Hail Mary catch for a touchdown, one of those “That. Just. Happened” moments that altered the course of history forever.

Jesus is alive

Before I started to take my faith seriously, **I often saw Jesus simply as the guy who died for our sins so that when I messed up, it wasn’t that big of a deal.** But the more I encountered people who were on fire for their Christian faith, and the more I started going to daily Mass and youth group, the more I began to question this box I had put Jesus in.

I was faced with the questions of, “If all Jesus did was die for me, then why didn’t the story end then and there? How are we still here worshipping Him today if His life just ended on the cross?”

Those questions are answered on Easter Sunday, when we celebrate and proclaim His resurrection. Jesus is alive. He did so much more than just die for us; He went the extra step that only Jesus could take, and rose from the dead for us. If we truly and firmly believe in the miracle of Easter, then it’s imperative that we do more than just celebrate for one Sunday; **go out and proclaim that He is risen!**

Proclaiming the Name

There are plenty of reasons why it's important to proclaim that Jesus is alive, but specifically the resurrection is a world-shaking event because it is *confirming*, *conquering* and *continuing*.

The resurrection is *confirming* because it proved Jesus' divinity. Up until His crucifixion, He had been bold and controversial in His teachings of who He really was and who had sent Him. As Jesus is hanging from the cross, people walk by shaking their heads and taunting Him, saying things like, "if you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

But Jesus showed that He indeed was the Son of God and proved His divinity not in simply saving Himself from death on the cross, but by defeating death by living again.

The resurrection is also *conquering* because of this defeat of death, as well as defeat of Satan. Romans 6:9 says, "We know that Christ, who was brought back to life, will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him."

Satan also has no power of Jesus, or over us, thanks to the resurrection. The devil fought savagely to overthrow the kingdom of heaven, and probably thought he had won on Good Friday. But instead of the cross and the tomb being a symbol of Jesus' defeat, they became symbols of His triumph. Sin and death were conquered that day once and for all.

Lastly, the resurrection of Jesus is *continuing* because He destroyed the notion that "You Only Live Once" (sorry Drake) and in doing so, opened the door for us to join Him in resurrection when He comes again. Jesus walking out of the tomb won back for us what was lost because of Adam's sin in the garden.

The How

It's important to understand not only why we should proclaim that Jesus is risen, but also how we should proclaim it. Easter is 50 days long and according to the USCCB, should be "celebrated in joy and exultation as one feast day."

We can't simply leave the wonder and excitement of the resurrection on Easter Sunday and then pack it up along with all of the decorations; we must spread the joy and exultation of Easter and

spread our hallelujahs far and wide, especially about something as awesome as our God rising from the dead.

1. Keep His commandments

In John 14:15, Jesus is at the Last Supper telling His disciples, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Imagine Easter as a sort of New Year’s for your faith, and a great opportunity to make resolutions to keep His commandments. In the renewal of our baptismal vows, we are refreshed and renewed in our journey to heaven.

If this is something Jesus decided to tell His apostles right before He headed to Calvary, you better believe it’s important. It sounds straightforward, because it is: follow the Ten Commandments and in doing so, you will be proclaiming and glorifying our risen king’s name.

2. Jump into the sea

In John 21, Simon and some of the other disciples decided to go fishing. At dawn, they see a guy standing on the shore, and eventually realize it’s Jesus. When Simon Peter realized Jesus was back from the dead, he was so excited that he jumped right into the water and swam to the shore.

In your own life, when you see Jesus, jump into the sea and swim towards Him. When you have the opportunity to encounter God, rush to Him! Whether in your youth group, through adoration, or however you can get to Him; **you are the one He hung from the cross for, and who He rolled away the stone for, so go to Him.**

3. Don’t just stand there

In Acts 1, Jesus is ready to go and ascends into heaven. His disciples were probably a bit unsure if He was leaving for good this time, because they’re still looking up when two men dressed in white appear next to them and say, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.”

The message is clear- what are you waiting for? Jesus made it clear to His disciples before He left that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and that He expected them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Now that Jesus is risen, don't just stand in front of the tomb looking around for Him; it's time to go out and spread the word that He is alive and He is ready to enter into our hearts, and to prepare for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

4. Go Forth

And so the fun begins! If we are to truly celebrate this Easter season as it is meant to be celebrated, we must spread the word of what has happened. The resurrection is too monumental of a moment to keep to ourselves. If one of your friends died and then showed up on your couch a few days later asking what they missed, wouldn't you tell the world?

Jesus being nailed to a cross speaks volumes about His love. The rolled-away stone and empty tomb strongly displayed His power. This Easter, let us join together in one, loud voice and proclaim the power of the resurrection, so that all may come to know that Jesus is alive.



Reflection for Easter Sunday

By: Bishop Robert C. Morlino @ badgercatholic.org

Acts 10:34a, 37-43 • Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8 • Matthew 28:1-10

“Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said.”

-Matthew 28:5-6

As I wish you the joy, the peace, and the hope that only Easter can bring, I am happy to reflect with you about the account of the empty tomb. The “two men in dazzling garments,” no doubt angels, had told the ointment-bearing women to be not afraid. But at the end of the account we hear, “They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” What is this fear that places obstacles in our path as we desire to meet Jesus Christ, risen from the dead? What is the stone that needs to be rolled away from the tomb so that we can see that Jesus is not there – rather, He has been raised, and so arrive at Easter truth?

If Jesus Christ is raised from the dead and looking to meet you and me, then that truth will change the world and will change all of those whom Jesus Christ encounters, at the very roots. We all say that we want our world and ourselves to be changed for the better. But when Jesus, raised from the dead, is the one who is going to work the change within us and within our world, we become afraid that that change will be more than we bargained for. We become afraid that Jesus will ask more of us than we can possibly deliver. The sinfulness and selfishness within us is like a stone blocking our vision of the empty tomb. Our sinfulness and selfishness beckon us to conceal our hearts from the blinding light of Jesus Christ.

We can identify with the women in the Gospel narrative about the empty tomb. They were trembling and bewildered and they fled. It was only the appearance of the risen Lord, always as the Consoler, the Strengthener, that enabled them to overcome their fear, trembling, and bewilderment. The sight of the empty tomb was not enough to open them to Easter truth with all of its joy, hope, and peace. When the risen One appeared as they met Him, then joy, peace, and hope conquered fear and flooded their minds and hearts. To be changed by Jesus Christ, risen

from the dead, is an awesome and fearful thing. But if such fear keeps us from meeting Him, then our greatest possibilities are out of reach. Jesus Christ is risen! Let us go out with a whole heart and overcome every fear in order to meet Him. That meeting is never too difficult to arrange, because He is always looking and waiting for that right moment to meet us. That is the desire of Jesus Christ himself, who is God. That meeting with Him, that life-changing meeting is our destiny.

Closing Prayer

Christ was given up for our sins and rose again to make us righteous.

Let us cry out to him, saying:

Save us, Lord, by your victory.

Christ our Savior, in conquering death you brought us joy,

in rising again you raised us up and

filled us with the abundance of your gifts.

Stir up our hearts, and sanctify this day through the gift of your Holy Spirit.

You are glorified by the angels in heaven

and adored by mankind on earth; as we celebrate your resurrection,

accept our worship in spirit and in truth.

Lord Jesus, save us; show your great mercy to your people,

as we look forward to our own resurrection,

have mercy on us, and protect us today from every evil.

King of glory, source of our life, grant that, when you come again,

we may be one with you in glory.

Amen.