



# Kingdom Culture

sermon on the mount series

April 7-9

An Easter Reflection 2023

*Easter is a matter of life and death, not only Jesus' but ours also*

The disarmingly familiar 'I've heard it all before, nothing new here' story of the death and resurrection of Christ is a battle for the believer to fight within. To renew, to refresh, to reinvigorate our faith like a truth heard the first time.

Easter is also a life and death truth for us. By our thinking, disposition and actions we have fallen far short of God's plan for us. We have in fact, become universally rebellious towards Him. The bible goes so far as to call us His enemies, and as God's enemies we deserve to be punished for our rebellion. So, in this way, we are all deserving the prospect of eternal separation from God.

However, the narrative of Easter has a very different outcome for believers. Instead of facing eternal death, we are offered eternal life and a on Earth deepest meaning and purpose. Instead of treating us like rebels under wrath, He has treated us like children, He has loved us by his grace, He has drawn us to Himself by the Holy Spirit, He has qualified and forgiven us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. We have been granted the sure promise of an eternity with Him.

So this Easter, may we reflect on its events in two ways - the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also on our experience of life and death. How God in his mercy has taken us who deserve death and judgement and granted us eternal life. This is not merely a future hope but a current reality. His plan for you is life, full and eternal!

### *Prayer Points for Easter*

- Many people will discover Jesus as Lord and Saviour for the first time this weekend
- Thank God for immeasurable gift of his Son and the salvation freely given in him
- Thank God for the hope we have in this life and the gift of life eternal
- For denominational leaders, who will have to prepare very short media grabs for TV and in print, that these would powerful and penetrating.
- Those unwell or recovering.
- Safety and sobriety on our roads
- God would touch the hearts of those in War torn Ukraine.

## *An Easter Prayer*

*Thank you heavenly Father for sending Jesus not only to be the Saviour of the world but also a Saviour for me. I fully acknowledge that I have fallen far short of your hopes and plan for my life. I have not reflected the love and kindness seen in the life of Jesus either in my thinking or actions. Please forgive me for my sin. I invite you to come into my life and to take complete control, I receive Jesus as my Lord, my director of life, my decision making centre, and also as my Saviour - please forgive me all my shortcomings. I am truly sorry. From this day forward I will live for you. Teach me to follow Jesus every day, to live for him in every way. Thank you, that you because of your mercy, you have received me into your family as a child. You have given me eternal life as well as the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen me. Thank you that you have given me the hope of living for you in this life and spending eternity you with you in the life to come. Amen*

If you have prayed this prayer for the first time the next step for you is to be baptised as a believer. Please see a pastor or elder to make a time to talk about it.

## *Reflection questions*

Read Ephesians 1

Then have a look over the questions and choose a few to discuss or reflect upon

1. "Hot cross buns, the stupid Easter Bunny, making it a long weekend and even the word Easter are all designs of the devil to divert us from the lifechanging meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus" Discuss
2. How do you personally balance the gruesomeness of crucifixion Friday with the notion of it being "Good" Friday?
3. Using vss 4, 5, 11 How would you answer someone who said to you "wow, I was lucky to discover Christ in my life. I suppose it was just being in the right time and at the right place"
4. How do you hold the dual truths of He chose us, and we chose him?
5. Vss 5-7 mention several things about a believer's status with God - what are they?
6. What are the three steps to become a Christian according to vs 13-14?
7. Vs 14 What might it mean to have the "eyes of your heart" enlightened?
8. Vs 19-20 The idea of power is central here. How does this apply to the many who feel overpowered by life and defeated by circumstances?
9. Pete Positive says I disagree with 1 Corinthians 15:19 "if only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied" because even if there was no life after death, surely living according to the 10 commandments, treating others as we want to be treated and loving our neighbour is the best way to live life anyhow" How is Pete both right and wrong?
10. What for you, this Easter, has been the one key thing God has brought to your attention?
11. What for you is the standout verse of Ephesians 1?