

**GOING FURTHER: A GUIDE TO REFLECTION FOR INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS
BASED ON THE MESSAGE GIVEN ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 17TH.**

Easter! It changes everything – it’s why we follow Jesus – it’s why we meet together in groups, and continue to press in to the Lord when alone. Yet it is so profound, and so frankly mysterious, that it tends to get crowded out by more mundane thoughts and the pressures of ordinary life. In this study we reflect on why it remains “as of first importance”.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-2.

1. What does it mean to you to “stand in” the “good news of the gospel”?
2. What does it mean to you to “hold fast” the truth you’ve received?

Paul goes on to remind the Corinthians what is “of first importance”. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. Paul is at pains to stress not just the **events** of the Easter story, but the **character** of that story.

Consider the events first. Jesus died for our sins and was buried; He rose from the dead on the third day.

3. Which of these dimensions of Easter is more “real” to your experience?
4. How do you “live into” these events in your daily life, such that they are clearly “of first importance”?

Now consider the character of these events. They happened “according to the Scriptures” – God sent His Son not as a late-stage rescue effort, but as something planned and true for all time, such that the (Old Testament) Scriptures attest to it.

5. How does it strengthen you to know this?
6. From your knowledge of the Scriptures, where do you find Easter foreshadowed or foretold?

Equally, Paul stresses, the resurrection of Jesus is supremely well-attested – just look at all the eye-witness testimony he points to. There is no doubt that Jesus was raised in bodily form. Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-20. Paul insists on this against the piety of the Corinthians, who imagine the body is something to be set aside at death. Not so: Jesus was raised with a body, and we will be too. A remarkable, undying body, to be sure; but recognizably our own. Our God’s commitment to His creation is not cancelled by death.

7. How do you imagine life after death, in light of this truth?
8. What changes for your approach to life here, given what is ahead?

Finally, consider what Paul elsewhere tells us to do with the events of Easter. Read Romans 10:9-11. There we learn that our faith requires open witness - we confess out loud "Jesus is Lord!". And our faith is powered by deep conviction - our heart believes God raised Jesus, with all that we've seen that to entail.

9. Where in the worlds you move in is God requiring you to declare "Jesus is Lord!"?

If you are meeting with others, pray for one another for the courage to declare, and for the deep assurance of hope - flowing from the resurrection of Jesus at Easter - in the resurrection to come. If alone, ask the Lord on your own behalf.