

It Changes Everything

(John 20)

I. Introduction

- A. Why does Easter take place on different dates different years? (*Mar 22 to Apr 25*)
1. By 2nd second, Easter was 1st Sunday after 1st full moon after vernal equinox.
 - a. In 325, the Council of Nicea decided to standardize a system for Easter.
 - b. They calculated Passover dates to create a Ecclesiastical Full Moon table
 - c. You can't just trust individual church leaders to figure out full moons!
 2. The Paschal Full Moon is first Ecclesiastical Full Moon after March 20
 - a. So in the Western church, Easter is the Sunday after Paschal Full Moon.
 - b. Of course, Paschal Full Moon can be 2 days apart from a real new moon
 3. How do we know date of Easter next year? Look it up on *Google Calendar*
- B. Someone has said the holiday of Easter is our world's "Cosmic Freudian Slip."
1. We live in a material, materialistic world where reality is what can be seen.
 - a. "Seeing is believing." "Proof is in the pudding." "Show me the money."
 - b. But on this one day, our hard-boiled world lets its guard down a bit
 - c. Easter points to reality beyond what is seen and behind scenes of death
 2. **Resurrection**: Power that shows Jesus as Son of God (**Rom 1:3-4**, NLT)
 - a. Resurrection is not just a "doctrine" of Christianity. It is **the doctrine**.
 - b. Paul says the death and resurrection is what matters (**1 Cor 15:3-5**, NCV)
 3. Paul tells us **why** resurrection changes everything (**Read: 1 Cor 15:14-19**)
- C. The message of the Resurrection is the point of this day we call Easter
1. I like colored eggs, marshmallow peeps, chocolate bunnies and new suits...
 - a. OK, not new suits. But traditional trimmings of Easter make it special
 - b. **Romans 14** says its OK to have special days to help us focus on God
 2. The point of this special day is resurrection— a truth that changes everything
 - a. We'll look at the resurrection through the eyes of two eye witness
 - 1) Both have traditional bad raps—one as a harlot, the other as doubter
 - 2) Both were changed by the resurrection that changes everything
 - b. Let's look at Easter through the eyes of Mary Magdalene and Thomas

II. It Changes Everything: Mary Magdalene (John 20:10-16)

- A. Mary is “Mary Magdalene” because she was from Magdala, a village in Galilee.
1. She was a disciple who travelled with Jesus & bankrolled his travels (**Lk 8:1**)
 - a. Mary was present for many of the most dramatic events of the gospel—
 - 1) She was a witness of the crucifixion itself (**Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25**)
 - 2) She was present at the burial of Jesus (**Mark 15:47; Matt. 27:61**).
 - 3) She was also the first witness of the resurrection itself (**Jn 20:1-18**)
 - b. Mary must have fascinated the early church; many traditions sprang up
 - 1) The most persistent is that she was a prostitute forgiven by Jesus
 - 2) **Tradition:** Sinful woman of **Luke 7** & adulterous woman of **John 8**
 - c. Most goofball theories about Jesus usually include Mary (*DaVinci Code*)
 2. What do we know? Jesus exorcised 7 demons from her (**Lk 8:2, Mk 16:9**)
 - a. We have no details, but we can assume her demonization was like others
 - 1) Some demons caused physical maladies— blind-deaf man in **Matt 12**
 - 2) Sometimes demons caused insanity—demoniac of Gerasenes (**Mk 5**)
 - b. We can assume that whatever its form, Mary demonization was horrific
 - 1) Like the demonic of Gerasenes, she had multiple demons within her
 - 2) Mary had literally lived hell on earth— *darkness had possessed her soul*
- B. So what did it mean for Mary when she watched Jesus die on the cross?
1. Mary had lost more than her Rabbi— she lost her Rescuer and Redeemer!
 - a. Jesus has saved her from the power of darkness and the horror of hell
 - b. But now Jesus her Savior was dead. And what would that mean for Mary?
 - 1) Would the demons return now the One with power over them was gone
 - 2) Who would overthrow the power of the evil one in her life now?
 2. Resurrection changed everything for Mary Magdalene (**John 20:10-16**)
 - a. Resurrection meant Mary didn't have to agonize over the return of darkness
 - b. Resurrection changed everything; Satan's power was broken (*Ken Young*)
“Rabboni! My Teacher and my God! You're alive, and my burdens melt away. Rabboni! Sweet Son of God Most High! I know death has lost its power and Your glory's here to stay
 3. Christ's resurrection changed everything for Mary Magdalene (**Rabbonai**)
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III. It Changes Everything: Thomas (John 20:24-28)

- A. Thomas will always be “*Doubting Thomas*,” but two stories shed another light
1. **First**, Thomas comes across as heroic in story of Lazarus in **John 11**
 - a. Jesus tells the apostles Lazarus is asleep (dead) and he’s go to Bethany
 - b. That decision is problematic; Bethany is right next door to Jerusalem
 - 1) In John 8-10, there serious danger to Jesus’ life centered in Jerusalem
 - 2) To go to Bethany was a dangerous trip, and the apostles knew that
 - c. It is Thomas who says, “*Let us go also, that we may die with him*” (**11:16**)
 - d. Thomas appears to be a guy very intent on following Jesus.
 2. **Second**, Thomas again appears intent on following Jesus in **John 14**
 - a. Jesus comforts the apostles, “*Let not your heart be troubled*” (**Jn 14:1-3**)
 - 1) Jesus ends, “*You know the way to the place where I am going*” (**14:4**)
 - 2) Thomas says, “*Lord, we don’t know where you are going...*” (**14:5**).
 - b. Thomas again is ready to follow Jesus, he just doesn’t understand how!
 3. These stories are not about doubt; they rather appear to be about loyalty!
 - a. Thomas appears ready to put himself at risk in order to follow Jesus
 - b. So how in the world did he come to be known as *Doubting Thomas*?
- B. Because he asked for proof of the resurrection story (**Jn 20:24-28**)
1. Could it be that this doubt was really Thomas’ loyalty working against him?
 - a. After all, Jesus warned people would saying, “*There he is*” (**Matt 24:23**)
 - b. Thomas was probably at the point all the apostles were before saw Jesus
 - 1) Thomas’ hope for his future had rested in Jesus, the point of hope
 - 2) But everything was now hopeless because Jesus had died.
 2. But Thomas experience of resurrected Christ changed everything
 - a. Hopelessness was overwhelmed by faith and certainty... and worship
 - 1) This is Bible’s clearest statement of Christ, “*My Lord and my God*”
 - 2) And these come from the lips of the man we call *Doubting Thomas*!
 - b. The resurrection changed everything for Thomas, just as it did for Mary
 3. Christ’s resurrection changes everything for you and me. (***Thomas’ Song***)

IV. Invitation

- A. Earlier we called Easter our materialistic world's "*cosmic Freudian slip*"
1. In a world dedicated to the here and now, the hereafter sneaks at Easter
 - a. Easter is a major traditional holiday, and the world pauses to observe it
 - b. Somehow amid bunnies, baskets & bonnets, resurrection message sneaks in
 - c. That's good thing! Every so often, world needs to hear what really matters!
 2. **Problem:** Easter can become a one a year reflection for Christians as well
 - a. When is the last time that we didn't have a resurrection sermon on Easter?
 - b. But... when was last time you focused on resurrection not around Easter
 - 1) **Old Sermons:** Half of my sermon on resurrection were around Easter
 - 2) Can it seem strange to sing "*Joy to the World*" when its not Christmas?
 - 3) Does it seem somehow awkward stressing resurrection not at Easter?
 3. If we're not careful, the resurrection of Christ becomes a seasonal message
- B. In the NT, The power of the resurrection is a daily force in the Christian life
1. Resurrection isn't just historical fact to believe—it's the in-breaking of God
 - a. Paul talks about the new life we have through the resurrection (**Rom 6:4**)
 - b. We're raised to live above sin in this resurrection power (**1 Cor 6:14-15**)
 - c. Paul talks about a spiritual resurrection power at work in us (**Eph 1:18-20**)
 - d. Paul wanted to know this resurrection power in his life (**Phil 3:9-10**)
 2. Yes, the truth of resurrection means everything at a edge of freshly dug grave
 - a. The message of resurrection means that though we die, we live eternally
 - b. But resurrection power of God is NOT just for the end of life—IT IS LIFE
 - 1) God points to Easter and says, "*I have the power to raise the dead*"
 - 2) He points to the train wreck of our life, "*I can raise your life as well*"
 3. Essential truth of our faith is that Jesus lives, and that makes all difference
 - a. It made all difference for Mary Magdalene and formerly Doubting Thomas; and it makes all the difference in our world and in our lives today
 - b. The song we are about to sing reminds us that it makes all the difference
*Because He lives I can face tomorrow, Because He lives all fear is gone—
Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living just because He lives.*