**Easter Means Victory!**

*Easter 2015*

**I Corinthians 15:55** *“O Death, Where Is Your Victory? O Death, Where Is Your Sting?”*

**1. Hope is more meaningful when preceded by HOPELESSNESS.**

**Luke 23:50-24:35**

* **DESPAIR** *“this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.”* **Luke 23:52 & 53**
* **CONFUSION** *“…they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus….they were perplexed about this…”* **Luke 24:3 & 4**

*“Why do you seek the living One among the dead?”* **Luke 24:5**

* **DISBELIEF** *“And these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.”* **Luke 24:11**
* **LOST HOPE** *“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”* **Luke 24:21**
* **HOST RESTORED** *“And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”*

**Luke 24:27**

*“The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon.”* **Luke 24:34**

**2. The Resurrection is THE BASIS OF OUR FAITH.**

**I Corinthians 15:17-19**

*“…If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.**Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”*

**3. The Resurrection FULFILLED THE PROMISES of the OT and Jesus.**

**Psalm 16:10**

*“For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”*

**Isaiah 53:9 &10**

*“His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.”*

**John 2:19-21**

*“Jesus answered and said them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ The Jews therefore said, ‘It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.”*

**Luke 24:6b-7**

*“…Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”*

**4. The Resurrection is PROVEN BY EVIDENCE.**

1. **THE EMPTY TOMB**
* The Resurrection OR
* It was stolen or moved. But, by whom?
	+ Grave Robbers
	+ The Disciples
	+ The Jews
1. **THE WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION**
* *“more than 500 at one time…”* I Corinthians 15:6
* *“so the other disciple (John) entered, he saw and believed.”* John 20:8
* *“Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”*  John 20:25 (Thomas)
* The Early Church-turned the world upside down in less than 300 years!
* Multiplied Millions of changed lives throughout history. (Paul)

**5. The Resurrection is our PROMISED VICTORY.**

“*Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall all be changed.”*

**I Corinthians 15:51 & 52**

*“Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of the Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you…”* **I Peter 1:3-4**