

Remember Easter –the Empty Tomb –He has Risen! Mt 28:1-9

Easter last fell on April Fools' Day in 1956. We've waited sixty-two years to see the irony in their alignment. On this day:

In 1988 The Otago Daily times ran an article that said Speights Brewery from their outside tap that had provided water free of charge pumped up from a spring deep below their plant would, just for this one day, pump instead Speight's beer, free of charge. The lines were horrendous. It proud me proud to work at the ODT at the time but not to be from Otago.

In 1989 New Zealand gardening guru Eion Scarrow told a radio station that a bottle of water would stop dogs using your front yard as a toilet, and people have followed it ever since. Scarrow told TVNZ 20 years later that he couldn't remember the inspiration for his prank.

In 1998, Burger King advertised a "Left-Handed Whopper" designed for the left-handed customers that visit their restaurants every day. Scores of customers requested the fake burger.

Of all the surprises on April Fools' Day, none could be greater than the event we celebrate today: the resurrection of a Galilean carpenter from the grave.

What's so unique about Easter? [The Empty tomb!]

Everything Jesus did in his public ministry was something others had done before him. Nothing he did proved that he was God.

Jesus was a great teacher, but Moses gave us the Ten Commandments and the first five books of the Bible. Jesus controlled nature, calming stormy seas and walking on water, but Moses parted the Red Sea and Joshua's people stepped into the flooded Jordan River as it stopped miraculously.

Jesus fed the five thousand, but Moses promised the people manna from heaven and Elijah provided for the widow with oil that was miraculously sustained during a drought (1 Kings 17:8–16). Jesus healed the sick, but Elisha healed the leprous Naaman (2 Kings 5). Jesus raised Lazarus and the widow's son from the dead, but Elijah and Elisha raised the dead as well (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4).

None of Jesus' miracles by themselves proved that he was God. But his resurrection did.

When the women met the risen Christ on Easter Sunday, "they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him" (v9).

What about Lazarus and others raised from the dead in Scripture? They all died again. They were only resuscitated, not resurrected.

Jesus is the only person in history to die and then be resurrected, never to die again. His resurrection proves that he is God. His empty tomb shows that he was resurrected, and his resurrection shows that he is God.

What does this mean for you today?

One: He is present in your pain.

David said to God, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me" (Psalm 23:4). God promised his people, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour" (Isaiah 43:2–3).

God is with us in our greatest pain. Easter proves that Jesus is God. Therefore, Jesus is present in your pain. He suffered the worst torture known to man in his crucifixion. He wept at the grave of Lazarus. He has been tempted in every way we are (Heb 4:15).

When you wonder if Jesus is with you in your sufferings, challenges, and temptations, remember Easter.

Two: He hears your every prayer.

Jesus promised, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matthew 6:8). The psalmist testified, "Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice" (Psalm 55:17).

God hears our prayers. Easter proves that Jesus is God. Therefore, Jesus hears your every prayer. The next time you wonder if Jesus is listening to you, remember Easter.

Three: He is more powerful than your greatest problems.

The Bible says of God, "It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you" (Jeremiah 32:17). God is all-powerful. Easter proves that Jesus is God. Therefore, Jesus is more powerful than your greatest problems.

The next time you wonder if Jesus has the power to help you with your challenges and struggles, remember Easter.

Four: He loves you where you are, as you are.

The Bible says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Easter proves that Jesus is God. Therefore, Jesus loves you where you are, as you are.

The next time you wonder if Jesus will forgive your sins, if he loves you no matter where you've been or what you've done, remember Easter.

Conclusion

Can the risen Christ change any life?
Can he heal any pain, hear anyone's prayer, address anyone's problem, and love any soul?

If Jesus could change Mrs. B's life, my life, and many others here, what can the risen Christ do in your life today?

Jesus can change anyone's life – If you struggle with this...
Simply Remember Easter – the empty tomb – and the angel's words - he has Risen!!