

* H E I S R I S E N *

CELEBRATING EASTER TOGETHER

April 16, 2017

*To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement*

Worship: Victory

VERSE 1

Born into the hands of sin
Crippled by the shame within
Open heart and restless soul
I was lost out on the open road

VERSE 2

Beaten on that bloody day
On his back a world of pain
Clinging to that cursed tree
Jesus bled and died for me
Jesus bled and died for me

CHORUS

Victory x2
Conquered death set me free
Victory x2
Jesus alive in me

Jesus alive in me

VERSE 3

Three days on the stone gives way
Ain't nothing but an empty grave
Gather all the sinners round
Tell them what great love we've found
Tell them what great love we've found

CHORUS x2

BRIDGE

Lead me to the water deep
In the gracious current I'll sink
I will rise dead in my sin
With Christ in me and I in him x3

CHORUS x2

Icebreaker

What is something beautiful that you have experienced this week?

Text for Discussion: John 14:6

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary – “The Good and Beautiful Life”

What does it mean for us to flourish? Whether or not we are actively searching for it, all of us yearn for the good and beautiful life. Our culture tells us this is a personal journey of self-discovery. By choosing the pieces of various philosophies, values, and religions that we feel are right for us, a personal version of the best way to live will emerge... and we will feel free. But this same journey can just as easily leave us aimless, anxious and adrift. These cobbled-together versions of the good life can't hold up under the immense weight of life's personal hardships and global tragedies. An existence governed by randomness and rooted in accident will never be fulfilling.

To the fundamental questions of identity, freedom, purpose and meaning, Jesus offers better answers and a comprehensive vision of reality. The Bible tells us that God cares deeply and personally about justice, relief for the poor, alleviating hunger and disease, as well as caring for the environment. Jesus doesn't diminish our reality. He makes the world a bigger, yet less frightening place. He satisfies our longings; he relieves our exhaustion. Because

the resurrection is true, we have hope and a reason to pour ourselves out for this world. As participants in the New Life, we are called to live provocative lives that reflect the truth of the Gospel.

What does Easter tell us about Jesus' vision for the good life?

The Truth – Jesus enables us to face the truth of our personal brokenness and our fallen world. Complete truthfulness is only possible where sin has been uncovered and forgiven by Jesus. At the foot of the cross, we recognize that we are not merely victims of a senseless fate. We are implicated – active participants in the mystery of sin and redemption. Through tears and rage and regret, we kneel and kiss the feet of the Crucified One, in Whose death we acknowledge our part.

The Good – We can be thankful for those moments when we are brought low, when we are humbled, when our moral superiority or feelings of “what we deserve” are thrown out the window – because our goodness and performance will never be enough to earn the Lord's favor. God's love is entirely of grace. The fact that Jesus died for us *and had to die* is a strange sort of Good News. It is a messy truth... but it is good because it offers us a costly grace that assaults our own comparative goodness, and it is beautiful because it makes possible what we most need on our journeys: hope.

The Beautiful – The life of Jesus was beautiful. Not simple or serene; His life was full of difficulty, suffering and betrayal, which empowers us to forgive those who have hurt us. But Jesus doesn't just model a beautiful life for us. He offers it to us – anyone who will take it. We need only let go of the life we've defined for ourselves. By taking hold of the way of forgiveness, the way of humility, the way of foot-washing, we no longer have to try to hold it all together ourselves. By letting grace define us, we are free to flourish with a purpose and meaning that only Jesus can offer.

And that is beautiful indeed.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

What is the good and beautiful life?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

1. Read the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10) Based on this, how would you define Jesus' vision of the **good** life?
2. Read John 8:1-11. How is Jesus' version of **truth** in this instance different from the version of the religious people?
3. Read Revelation 21:1-5a. What does this picture of **beauty** tell you about Jesus' desire for your life in the here and now?
4. Application: Pick one of these aspects of following Jesus (good, true, beautiful), and find a specific way that you see it in your relationship with Him. Each day this week, write out a prayer of thanksgiving for that. If you're comfortable doing so, bring the prayers back to the group and read one of them next week to the group.

Praying for One Another

(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)

- Thank God for sacrificing His Son so that we could have eternal life.
- Pray that we would trust that God knows what's best for the good and beautiful life.