

Fear Not

Revelation 1:17-18 || *Pastor Matt Trexler* || Easter 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What Easter traditions did your family have when you were growing up?

Worship: John 11:25-27 (*Read aloud three times, spend time in reflection listening for God's invitation to you.*)

Bible Passage: Revelation 1:17-18

Sermon Summary

NT Wright recently wrote, "This Easter, there is a stillness, not of rest, but of poised, anxious sorrow." Many of us have experienced this: trying to reassure our loved ones in the midst of our own uncertainty, acting like things are normal when nothing is. We are confused, distressed, fearful. We need to acknowledge these emotions, or they threaten to devour us. What we need is a fresh vision of the resurrected Jesus. He is the One who can speak with certainty and authority in the midst of all of this. Christ sees us in our fear and pain, and He shows up. Our Savior is not distant from us; He is personal. In Jesus, God entered His world. Even now, He is beside us, a hand tenderly on our shoulder, saying "Do not be afraid."

Death. It's the fear at the root of all other fears, an enemy we could never defeat. In this greatest of battles, we need someone to fight for us, because we are not the champions of our story. This is precisely what Jesus has done. He died on a Cross for the sins we could not conquer. In His resurrection, He defeated Death. This is the joy and glory of Easter: that the God of all grace and love has given us His Son – not to condemn the world but to save it.

Christ's victory is our victory. Our confidence is therefore rooted in the truth that the One who died for us is the One who sits on the throne. A new world has been opened, and we are invited to belong to it. This is why we celebrate Easter – even this Easter – for when we bring our griefs and sorrows and allow them to be held in God's hands, we can begin to experience healing and even new possibility. The Light of the World has defeated the darkness, and we are welcomed into the new day that God is making.

Discussion Questions (*It's better to wrestle deeply with a few good questions than to gloss over many.*)

- How does Jesus comfort John in this passage? Does this scene bring you comfort? Why or why not?
 - What is significant about the statements Jesus made about Himself in this passage?
 - How has this Easter changed how you look at the death and resurrection of Christ?
 - How does the resurrection of Christ encourage us to more deeply build community with others?
 - How can we do this as we look ahead, in light of continued social distancing?
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What Can We Be Praying For?

Here is a resource to pray for the church, the nation, and the world for the next 30 days: <https://pcaga.org/prayer/>.

Engage & Experience

How can the way in which you experienced Easter this year make future Easter celebrations more memorable and impactful? Continue the practice of contacting one person and praying for 3 people each day during our social distancing time. Keep a journal of your prayers.