

## Starting Fresh

### Week: Easter

I. We believe that God is actively working out His purpose on a global scale and yet He invites us to know Him as our personal God. He has a grand purpose for the world and a grand purpose for our individual lives! Everything we do around Tab is unified in our common mission:

[Slide]: To push through boundaries to share God's story from Norfolk to the nations!

We find life as we give our lives away! We would love to partner with you in what God is doing from Norfolk to the nations!

A. Today, we're going to talk about starting fresh. What does that have to do with Easter and resurrection?

[Slide]: Everything!

If you're not yet a Christ follower, thank you for being here. You are welcome at Tab.

1. If you are a Christ follower, we believe that the resurrection was the ultimate example of starting fresh. God gave humanity a choice. True love cannot be forced and demands a choice. Human beings from the beginning made the choice to rebel against God and the result of sin was death. The love of God was made fully evident in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus because in Christ Jesus, God Himself paid the full penalty due our sin. Jesus willingly died for our sins because it was the only path forward to satisfy the character of God, both His holiness and love. Everything necessary for those weighed with sin (which is all of us) to have a complete relationship with God was accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

2. Here's the great news! The resurrection isn't just an historical event. It is that and we actually have to work a lot harder to disprove the resurrection on historical grounds than to prove it.

The resurrection in its purest form, which we can experience today, is an invitation to:

[Slide]: Start Fresh!

a. Who doesn't love a fresh start?

(1) I'll never forget one day in graduate school my professor walks into class and doesn't say a word. He has a stack of papers, and he hands them out one by one. I can't speak for everyone but mine looked like the Battle of Gettysburg had occurred right on top of my paper. He canceled class and sent us back to the library for a fresh start. I was thankful.

(2) The fresh start that really sticks in my mind was the night I had to have a really hard conversation with my wife and ask for a fresh start. I wasn't committed to Jesus during the first years of our marriage and made some poor choices. God gave me a fresh start in the fall of 2009 and the Holy Spirit soon after convicted me to make things right with my wife. I experienced God's grace through a fresh start, and I felt God's grace in a tangible way through experiencing a fresh start with someone I loved but had offended.

3. The resurrection isn't just an event that has no bearing on our lives today!

The resurrection is THE pathway to starting fresh!

II. Sandwiched on both sides of the resurrection is the personal failure of one of Jesus's key disciples. His name is Peter. His name means "rock" and his confession of Jesus as Messiah was declared to be the rock on which the Church would be built. But on both sides of the resurrection, Peter isn't living up to his namesake very well.

A. In Mark's gospel which is Peter's account of the life of Jesus, we get this inside scoop into a personal life and how the resurrection was the pathway to starting fresh. I'm so thankful that the Bible gives us the full story, scars, and all, so we can see ourselves in the story. The night of Jesus's arrest, the disciples and Jesus are together for their last meal and Jesus knows the events that will soon transpire. Jesus knows and He still unconditionally loves.

Mark 14:27-30 [Slide]: 27 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will fall away, because it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. 28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." 29 "Peter told him, "Even if everyone falls away, I will not." 30 "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to him, "today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."

1. Jesus has given His life investing in His disciples. We know by John's gospel that this very night before the disciples all deny Jesus, He gets on His knees and washes the feet of His disciples. This was an extreme

display of humility that was reserved for the lowliest servant. Jesus knows He will be deserted and yet He serves. Judas gets more press, but technically all the disciples betrayed Jesus even those in His inner circle. Maybe we've experienced betrayal and the closer we are to the person the harder it hits. Jesus was fully human and fully God. He felt the sting of betrayal.

2. Peter can't believe the words that Jesus utters. "Even if everyone falls away, I will not." Peter as the bold leader of the disciples has just staked his word against Jesus's word. Jesus responds with a prophetic word that "before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." Not once, not twice, but three times! The word deny comes from the Greek word:

[Slide]: Apornese

- a. The word has a literal meaning that is stronger than a simple denial. It's a word that means a deep sense of shame. Jesus is looking at Peter and He's declaring that when the pressure hits, Peter will be ashamed of Him. Peter has professed Jesus to be his Savior and friend and with each subsequent denial Peter was cutting off all association with the One who had given Him everything.
3. We can likely see some of ourselves in these events of Peter's life. I can certainly see myself. Times that I've run my mouth and inserted foot. Those times I've bailed on someone who had done so much for me. Those times I've denied Jesus. I see myself here.
4. But in the midst of Jesus's prediction of Peter's denial, a personal invitation made possible by the resurrection has already been extended. When Jesus has laid claim to your life, you can't escape the unconditional love of Christ!

- a. Jesus said, "All y'all are going to scatter like weak sheep,

Mark 14:28 [Slide]: "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

In other words, Jesus knew what was about to take place. He knew His disciples would fail and He was already extending an invitation to start fresh! That is the audacious love of God! His love isn't contingent on our performance. He's done everything necessary to extend the gift of salvation. That's the fresh start we all desperately need. We simply accept the gift.

5. It's one thing to declare something will happen. It's another thing when the declaration comes to pass. Peter did deny Jesus three times and the last denial was with a servant girl.

Peter proved to be no different than the others and at the sound of that second rooster crow, Peter:

[Slide]: Wept

Mark 14:72 [Slide]: 72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time, and Peter remembered when Jesus had spoken the word to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

- a. This is the moment we'd say Peter hit rock bottom. He failed and he failed miserably. Some things we experience that have no words. When we're crushed and broken and all we can do is weep. There doesn't feel like there could ever be a fresh start. The weight of shame and guilt can be paralyzing.
6. If that was the end of Peter's story there wouldn't be any hope, but that's not the end! Jesus had declared Peter's failure before it occurred, and Jesus had also declared that He would be waiting ahead for them in Galilee.

- a. What's significant about Galilee?

[Slide]: Galilee was the place their journey with Jesus began!

Jesus had declared the fresh start before they even knew they needed it!

7. Let's read the resurrection account together starting in Mark 16:1:

Mark 16:1-8 [Slide]: 1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they could go and anoint him. 2 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb at sunrise. 3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance to the tomb for us?" 4 Looking up, they noticed that the stone -which was very large- had been rolled away. 5 When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side; they were alarmed. 6 "Don't be alarmed," he told them. "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they put him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there just as he told you.'" 8 They went out and ran from the

tomb, because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them. And they said nothing to anyone, since they were afraid.

- a. These verses give us an account of the resurrection and 3 words specifically that forever altered all creation!

[Slide]: He has risen!

- b. But sometimes a cosmic shift isn't perceived to be enough, because the weight of shame and guilt can often feel heavier than the rolled boulder in front of Jesus's tomb! We convince ourselves that's for everyone else, but you don't know what weight I carry! Peter was ashamed of Jesus in His darkest hour. It was going to take a bit more for Peter to believe he had a fresh start. It was going to take a personal invitation! That's exactly what he got!

Mark 16:7 [Slide]: 7 "But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there just as he told you.'"

- c. The bigger the failure, the deeper the isolation and shame. The angel was instructed to make sure Peter knew he was being extended a fresh start. The resurrection would overcome any sin, period! Jesus was going ahead like He'd promised, ready for a fresh start that originates out of the hope of the gospel. Sin has been dealt with once and for all. Our step is to simply accept the gift by faith.

- 8. Peter's sin, even his denial of Jesus, was dealt with on the cross and he was granted a fresh start, like we all are, through the resurrection. Learning to fully embrace grace is a journey and there's still some work to be done. But if Jesus was willing to go through death and resurrection, He'll do whatever it takes for our restoration!

III. Next week we'll catch up with Jesus and Peter on what John's gospel calls the Sea of Tiberius. The Sea of Tiberius is another name for the Sea of Galilee where Jesus and Peter first met. I'm not going to say anymore. You'll have to come back next week to see how the story continues, but it just keeps getting better!

- A. Here's what is significant for us today. The resurrection is an event but it's not just an event. It's God's pathway made exclusively through Jesus that extends to each of us a fresh start. It's the fresh start that we all desperately need, which is the forgiveness of our sins and to be declared in right standing before God. Resurrection reconciles us into permanent relationship with God. It's the one fresh start that changes everything else.

- 1. If you haven't trusted Christ as Savior, today is the day. There's no fine print or no disqualifiers. God looks over our past and our future, which encompasses all our shortcomings, just like Jesus did with Peter, and He STILL paid the price to grant us a fresh start! Accept the gift today!