



St. Matthew's Cathedral eNews

Christ + Compassion + Community

From the Dean

Two Questions

"...if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." 1

Corinthians 15:14

The two questions we have to address on this day—Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection—is: (1) whether it is true that Jesus actually, physically, bodily rose from the dead; and (2) what that means for the likes of you and me.

First, did Jesus really rise from the dead? I really believe that reasonable people of good will can have a difference of opinion on that account. Certainly, I believe that the New Testament writers are credible witnesses. I love the detail that John gives that smack of eyewitness testimony. Charles Colson said that if twelve men during the Watergate scandal couldn't keep a secret for three weeks, how in the world could these twelve disciples of Jesus keep a lie about Jesus rising from the dead is absolutely impossible in our everyday experience with people.

Of course, if you reject the notion outright that someone—anyone—could actually rise from the dead, then it follows that you will reject the resurrection of Jesus as a lie. But remove the bias against miracles (or call it "having a worldview that states that miracles simply don't occur"), then the testimony of those early disciples is really quite believable.

Second, if Jesus *did* rise from the dead, then what does that mean for you and me? Everything. Noted Anglican bishop and New Testament scholar N.T. Wright wrote:

"You see, the bodily resurrection of Jesus isn't a take-it-or-leave-it thing, as though some Christians are welcome to believe it and others are welcome not to believe it. Take it away, and the whole picture is totally different. Take it away, and Karl Marx was probably right to accuse Christianity of ignoring the problems of the material world. Take it away, and Sigmund Freud was probably right to say that Christianity is a wish-fulfillment religion. Take it away, and Friedrich Nietzsche was probably right to say that Christianity was a religion for wimps. Put it back, and you have a faith that can take on the postmodern world that looks to Marx, Freud and Nietzsche as its prophets, and you can beat them at their own game with the Easter news that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

If Jesus *did* rise from the dead, then we are not just animals that are a little higher on the evolutionary scale. The sin and brokenness and sorrow of this world are not the final answer. The final answer is God's victory over death, and this day is the proclamation of God's victory over death *and* life.