

**Easter 2018**  
**Who needs God anyway? John 20:10-18; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7**

**Introduction:**

1. Americans are migrating from religion at an unprecedented rate
2. Not because the alternatives are more appealing, but religion has lost its appeal
3. What has happened in the US when prayer was removed from the schools?
4. What has happened in the US as a result of the vilification of Christianity?
5. Jesus not only spoke in the synagogues but also where the people were
6. Christianity cannot be hidden behind church walls but needs to be lived out
7. Why do we need to have to believe in God – why can't we just know?
8. The Goldilocks Zone – what is that?
9. The majority of us have struggled with our belief in God
10. Who needs God, and do we really need God?
11. Unfortunately, there is a growing group of people who completely dismiss God
12. More and more people are saying religion is the problem
13. If someone is *first* convinced the Bible is God's Word, you can leverage "The Bible says"
14. If we're going to reach post-Christians, we must change the way we *talk* about the Bible.
15. Today when people come to a church they come with a full slate
16. I believe when folk see an authentic living out of the gospel they will be drawn to it
17. So how do we wrap our heads around this whole Easter thing given that it is the bedrock of the Christian faith?
18. Today more than 2.3 billion people around the world are celebrating Easter
19. In the USA 78% or 247 million identify themselves as Christian
20. So, what does Easter stand for?

**E – Empty Tomb that provides hope for a hopeless world:**

1. Story of father and son in Mexico City
2. ***Matthew 12:20-21 – says, A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In His name the nations will put their hope.***
3. A bruised reed and a smoldering wick – describes many in this room today
4. There are many bruised reeds and smoldering wicks in the Bible.
5. The great message of Easter is that if Jesus Christ was powerful enough to move the stone and overcome the grave, then he is powerful enough to move the stones that are blocking your life.
6. Story from Civil War
7. Henri Nouwen *"Although I experience many ups and downs in my emotions and often feel great shifts and changes in my inner life, you remain the same. Your sameness is not the sameness of a rock, but the sameness of a faithful lover. Out of your love I came to life; by your love I am sustained, and to your love I am always called back. There are days of sadness and days of joy; there are feelings of guilt and feelings of gratitude; there are moments of failure and moments of success; but all of them are embraced by your unwavering love."*

**A – Angel who invites them to look:**

1. The angel said ***“come and see the place where He lay”***
2. God still invites us to do that
3. The evidence is there for you to investigate - An empty tomb, undisturbed grave cloths, a 2000-pound stone that was supernaturally rolled away.
4. There were 515 eye-witnesses to the fact that Jesus had come back from the dead
5. In **2 Timothy 1:12** the apostle Paul wrote ***“I know WHOM I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him for that day.”***
6. I’m here because I know whom I have believed, and I’ve searched, and I’m persuaded that He is risen from the dead, alive in the world and making a difference in my life.
7. And millions of people down through the centuries have themselves met Jesus, first hand, and followed Him and He transformed their lives.

**S– Surprise at an empty grave:**

1. Story of boy who had offering for Sunday school
2. Not many people expected him to show up on that Sunday morning either and what a surprise, what a shock it was
3. Everyone involved was surprised at how it turned out.

**T - Tell – the command they had been given:**

1. After the angel invited the surprised women into the tomb, they were told to go and tell this good news to others.
2. The command was given, and yet so many choose to ignore it
3. We need to go and tell all

**E – Excitement that the women felt that morning:**

1. We don’t always see how things are going to work out
2. Story of PFC Jessica Lynch
3. Think about the disciples on Friday, on Saturday
4. All of us have a day 3

**R – Resurrected Lord who is alive today:**

1. Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, Joseph Smith and any other man-made deity are still in the grave
2. Because of Easter Christ Jesus is more powerful than anything in life – including death
3. Story of Kay Arthur
4. Maybe today you need grace and forgiveness and hope
5. So many people are confused about their identity, their purpose and life’s choices
6. There is only one answer
7. What is the faith of the next generation worth?
8. For all the above reasons – this is why we need God
9. Without this nation turning back to God the downward spiral will continue
10. Story of African Muslim
11. How many telltale signs that Jesus is a living presence have you missed?

