

MESSAGE - Death Didn't Stand A Chance - EASTER - 4.5.26

Have you ever thought about the **raw power of God's voice**?

- **When God spoke at Creation...** light pushed away the darkness... land separated the waters... and life began to emerge.
- **When God spoke to Moses...** He rescued His people by splitting the sea and destroying Pharaoh's army.
- **When God spoke to Samuel...** He chose David... a young man that stood unshaken in the face of Goliath, because he knew the battle was the LORD's.
- **And when God's Word came down in the flesh...** demons ran... the sick were healed... storms were silenced... and even the gates of death couldn't withstand His voice.

Because...

[SLIDE 1] When God speaks, opposing forces cannot hold their ground.

From the first pages of scripture to the last,
the power and authority of God is declared from the hearts of the faithful:

- **Job said:** No one can stop the LORD.¹
- **Jonathan said:** Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving.²
- **The LORD said through Isaiah:** No one can undo what I have done.³
- **Jeremiah said:** Nothing is too hard for the LORD.⁴
- **The angel Gabriel said:** No word from God will ever fail.⁵
- **Paul said:** If God is for us, who can be against us?⁶

And now, in Acts 2, Peter boldly declares the resurrection of Jesus.

¹ Job 42:2 (summary)

² 1 Samuel 14:6

³ Isaiah 43:13 (NLT)

⁴ Jeremiah 32:17

⁵ Luke 1:37

⁶ Romans 8:31

He said...

[SLIDE 2] Acts 2:24 - “God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.”

That’s the reason we gather to celebrate Easter!

It was ***impossible*** for death to keep its hold on Jesus.

Peter *was not* saying that death simply failed.

He *was* saying:

[SLIDE 2A] Death lacked the ability to overcome the power of God.

Death *tried* to keep Jesus restrained.

But that’s like trying to stop a freight train with your bare hands.

It doesn’t matter how strong you are...

It’s just not gonna happen!

The gates of death simply were not strong enough to keep Jesus in.

Not even close.

And that’s not myth or metaphor.

This is *historical reality*.

Hundreds of people witnessed the risen Jesus.

Including Peter.

And now, in Acts chapter 2,

Peter’s surrounded by Jews from all over the world.

They’ve gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost —

That’s the Jewish festival that celebrates God giving the Law through Moses.

But this Pentecost was different.

This was the day the Holy Spirit *came powerfully* on the disciples, and enabled them to speak the good news about Jesus, in languages they never learned.

It didn't matter if you were from Asia, Egypt or Mesopotamia... God's message was being heard by *everyone* in their native languages.

**Many in the crowd were amazed!
But some doubted.**

And because they doubted,
Peter confidently stood up...
He raised his voice to the crowd...
And he said...

[SLIDE 3] Acts 2:22 - "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know."

Peter's saying:
Jesus was the real deal.
You were all witnesses of the things He did.
And yet...

[SLIDE 4] Acts 2:23 - "This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."

Notice that Jesus was put to death by those who nailed Him to the cross.
But that only happened... because *God allowed it.*

God handed Him over.

This was His "*deliberate plan.*"

In fact, Paul said in 1 Corinthians...

[SLIDE 5] 1 Corinthians 2:7-8 - we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord.

In other words...

[SLIDE 6] The death of Jesus was no accident.

And Jesus knew it was coming.
He knew the Father's plan.
He knew what His death was leading to...
and what it would accomplish.

That's why He said at the Last Supper:
"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you *before I suffer*."⁷

He knew the suffering that He was about to face...

He knew He'd be betrayed, mocked and beaten...
He knew He'd be humiliated and crucified.

And yet, as I said on Thursday night,
Jesus *eagerly desired* that last meal with them,
because He knew how things would end.

Again, this was His plan all along.

**He was ready to walk the valley of suffering,
because this was the path that would save His people from their sin.**

Death would *try* to hold Him...
But the battle was the LORD's.

⁷ Luke 22:15

[SLIDE 7] Death didn't stand a chance.

As Peter said:

“It was *impossible* for death to keep its hold on Him.”

And not just Him...

God's people have always looked to the LORD for the promise of resurrection. That's why Peter gives us the example of David.

Peter quotes David when he said to the LORD...

[SLIDE 8] Acts 2:26-27 - Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay.⁸

David's loyalty and faith in the LORD was grounded in the promise that God would not abandon him in the realm of the dead.

And yet, Peter says...

[SLIDE 9] Acts 2:29 - Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

In other words:

David was still in his tomb.

But God's promise didn't *fail*.

His promise was *fulfilled* in Jesus as He *broke out* of the tomb.

And so, using David as an example, Peter continues...

[SLIDE 10] Acts 2:30-32 - But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his

⁸ See Psalm 16:8-10

body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

So Peter's saying:
Jesus died just like David did.

But Jesus is the Messiah!
He's the descendant of David that would be placed on the throne forever!
And God raised this Messiah to life!

And what's really amazing...
is that we're given a picture of what the resurrection actually looked like.

Scripture says, on that first Easter morning,
several women went to the tomb to check on Jesus.
But the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty.

And it wasn't long before Jesus began showing up!
In fact, Paul tells us that over 500 people witnessed the risen Jesus.⁹

But, interestingly enough, it wasn't just people that witnessed the risen Lord.
Peter says that after Jesus rose from the dead...

[SLIDE 11] 1 Peter 3:18-20 - ...he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah.

So, after Jesus was raised to life,
He went and proclaimed something to the evil spirits from the days of Noah.

What was He proclaiming?

My guess is that **He declared His victory over death!**

Maybe He said something like what He says later in Revelation...

⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:6

[SLIDE 12] Revelation 1:18 - Jesus said: I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

So, not only was Death unable to keep its grip on Jesus...

But Jesus also took the keys that unlocks the realm of the dead!

In other words...

[SLIDE 13] Jesus now holds all authority over life and death...

And **no one** has the power to take that away from Him.

That's why Jesus said in Matthew 28:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."¹⁰

That's why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:

"Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"¹¹

And that's why Peter said here in Acts 2:

"it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him."¹²

And so...

Peter would agree with us when we say:

He is risen... He is risen indeed.

But Peter would add one more line.

Because the resurrection is about more than *just* victory over death.

Look at what Peter said in verse 36...

¹⁰ Matthew 28:18

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 15:55

¹² Acts 2:24

[SLIDE 14] Acts 2:36 - “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Let’s talk about those words: Lord *and* Messiah.

Both words have Old Testament roots...
but they don’t mean the same thing.

[SLIDE 15] The word “Lord” speaks to His divine authority as God. And the word “Messiah” speaks to His royal authority as King.

In the OT, the word “Lord” is a title used in place of God’s personal name.
And now Peter’s claiming that Jesus is the Lord... *He’s God*.

And the word “Messiah” refers to the promised King from the line of David that the Jews were still waiting for. But Peter’s saying:
Our King already came, and you crucified Him.

So, bottom line, when Peter says that Jesus is both Lord and Messiah, he’s declaring that...

[SLIDE 16] Jesus is *both God and King!*

Again, this isn’t metaphor.
This isn’t symbolic language.

**When Jesus ascended to heaven,
He was literally enthroned as King.**

This has *already* happened!

We’re not waiting for the day when Jesus becomes King.

Jesus is King *right now!*

And what’s *really* amazing is that we’ve got the recording.
We don’t have to wonder what the coronation of Jesus looked like.

Because the Apostle John saw it through a vision,
and he wrote it down for us in Revelation chapter 5...

[SLIDE 17] Revelation 5:5-6 - Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne...

John’s talking about Jesus.

He’s the Messiah that David talked about long ago.
He’s the Lamb who had been slain...

And the One who was crucified, is now being crowned.
And those who witnessed it began singing a new song...

[SLIDE 18] Revelation 5:9-10 - ...saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests...”

In other words...

Jesus was slain as an innocent Lamb for the sins of the world.

And now, anyone who puts their believing loyalty in Him,
belongs to *His Kingdom*.

That fact made heaven erupt in praise!
John says...

[SLIDE 19] Revelation 5:11-12 - Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels ... In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

[SLIDE 20] Revelation 5:13 - Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

And the thing to notice...

Is that **no one** receives this kind of worship, except for God.

This is why Peter can say Jesus is *both* **God and King**.

That’s why I said that if Peter were here,
he’d add another line to our Easter greeting.

We say...

[SLIDE 21] He is risen... He is risen indeed.

Peter would add one more line.

He’d say...

[SLIDE 22] He is King... He is King indeed.

So Peter’s message to the crowd in Acts 2 was this:

The promised King has come.

This King has conquered death.

This King reigns *now*.

And He invites all of us into His Kingdom.

[...]

After people heard Peter’s message,
the scripture says they were **“cut to the heart.”**

They were so moved by Peter’s words that they asked him and the other disciples what they should do.

Peter said to them...

[SLIDE 23] Acts 2:38 - “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What does Peter mean by the word “repent”?

Maybe you’ve heard it explained as:

Turning from your sin.

Or... *Stop doing bad things.*

That’s not wrong.

That is what it means to repent.

But that definition is ***way too small*** for Peter’s context.

Peter’s sermon has been building toward something much bigger.

He’s saying:

- Jesus is alive
- Jesus ascended into heaven
- He is both Lord and Messiah — He’s God and King

So when the crowd asks: *What should we do?*

Peter’s answer is not merely: “*Try harder to behave.*”

Peter’s saying:

[SLIDE 24] Repent. Realign your entire life with the true King, Jesus.

Reconsider who you thought was really in charge of your life.

Place your allegiance in the One who truly holds *all* power and authority.

[...]

So how did the people respond to Peter?

Look at verse 41...

[SLIDE 25] Acts 2:41 - Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

That's the power of our God.

That's the resurrection power that breaks the grip of death.

Easter isn't just about the empty tomb.

Easter also reminds us that death doesn't stand a chance,
Because **Jesus is King**.

That's a message that cuts to the heart,
because it forces us to ask ourselves...

[SLIDE 26] Will we continue living as though we're in charge? Or will we trust the King who conquered death?

Because the resurrection of Jesus is an invitation for everyone.

It's an invitation to realign our lives with the One who truly reigns as King.

It's an invitation to place our confidence,
and our allegiance, in *no other power* but His.

The Bible says that if we declare with our mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, *we will be saved*.¹³

Saved from our sins.
Saved from the grip of death.
And saved for eternal life with Him.

And so, when we declare:

He is risen... and He is King...

¹³ Romans 10:9

When we declare that...
We're saying He's both God and King over our lives.
We're saying He holds the keys to our eternal destiny.

One day, when our time in this life is running short,
We can know without a shadow of doubt...

[SLIDE 27] Death doesn't stand a chance.

Death holds no power over those who trust in Jesus.

It's merely a transition.

**Because the same power that raised Jesus from the grave,
will also raise us up to be with Him.**

That truth has been echoing across Creation,
ever since that first Easter morning.

Right now we're experiencing life.

But through His resurrection power...

We will experience life to the full.

That's the *unstoppable* power of our King Jesus.

And that's the message of Easter.

Amen?

Let's pray.

We pray as Jesus taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into testing, but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever,
Amen.