

E A S T E R

— *at Red Rocks Church* —

Chad Bruegman | 4.16.17

LG Weekly

S T A R T

To get things started, go around the circle and answer these two questions:

If you watch a reality show, which is your favorite and why? If you don't watch "reality TV," what's your idea for a good show you would watch?

S H A R E

The historical fact that Jesus was crucified, buried in a tomb guarded by soldiers, and still walked out has changed the world forever. For Christians, we gather together and celebrate the fact that because Jesus defeated death and the grave; we will also rise with him one day. Because Jesus Christ walked out of that tomb, we can know that he is who he says he is, and that means his promises are true. For those who don't believe, Easter is just another holiday having to do with a mythical bunny, candy, and the excitement of Spring. But for those who know Jesus ... Easter is serious business. The problem is that so many are unaware of what kind of life God desires to offer us.

It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

—C.S. Lewis
The Weight of Glory

If we don't know what to do with a God-shaped hole in our hearts, where eternity has been set in the hearts

of men, then we will settle for lesser things. As C.S. Lewis wrote, we will end up “making mud pies” in slums, when God has so much more for us.

Read Ecclesiastes 3:11

When you reflect on your own life, what would be your “mud pies” in life?

If you have been following Jesus, what is one example of how your desires have changed from “mud pies” to something greater? How difficult is it to maintain your desire for something greater?

G R O W

Throughout the Old Testament, generations of kings came to power either by force or by inheritance. Each time a new king assumed the throne, it was common that within the first year or two he could, by declaration, set prisoners and captives free or forgive the debts of the debtors as an act of good will or a political statement to his predecessor.

Let's read Isaiah 61:1-3

It isn't coincidence that Jesus read the beginning of this portion of scripture in the synagogue recorded in Luke 4. He then rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Imagine that moment of incredible tension. Jesus, a young man everyone knew, proclaims that he is the one who has come. Some were outraged, others were bewildered ... but all now had a decision to make regarding this man Jesus. Who was he really? A prophet? A blasphemer? The questions people must have asked were endless. But the truth was, God himself came to live among his own people and what Jesus proclaimed he would do in that synagogue; he brought to pass. Everything the people were hoping and praying for was standing in the room, yet they couldn't accept it.

In Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible Reader's Companion*, we note something interesting regarding the portion of Isaiah 61 that Jesus read recorded in the book of Luke:

This messianic prophecy was quoted by Christ in the synagogue at Nazareth—but only in part. He closed the scroll after reading the proclamation of the Lord's favor and made no mention of “the day of vengeance of our God” (see Luke 4:17–21). The incident is significant for several reasons.

First, it was a public announcement by Jesus of Nazareth that He was the Messiah promised by the prophets. Second, it suggests two comings of Christ, the first to save, the second to judge. And third, it illustrates a difficulty in interpreting O.T. prophecy. Predictive passages typically make no clear reference to times and, as in this verse, may link events separated by thousands of years.

Isaiah 61 opens with the proclamation of good news. Why do you think so many people are so resistant to the Good News that Jesus brings?

The scripture is clear that in this world we will have trouble and heartbreak. What does it mean to you to have your heart mended?

God desires to exchange our ashes for his beauty, our mourning for gladness, and praise rather than despair. Which one would you say you are most in need of exchanging right now and why?

M O V E

In the Easter message, Chad conveyed how Jesus Christ allowed himself to be demolished in our place; to receive the punishment that was due to each of us. God desired to set us free. This is the great exchange that took place on the cross. It was prophesied that Jesus would choose to do the will of God.

Let's Read Isaiah 53:4-11 and Isaiah 61:4-11

God chose to save us through a "suffering servant" and not by a military force. God's ways are so different than man's ways of saving. He carried our sorrows, was afflicted and crushed and ultimately pierced for our transgressions. It was God's plan to allow Jesus to be crushed for us and then resurrected. This is the serious business of Easter.

For something different, we are going to end our time with a few minutes of reflection in silence. If you have your Bible, re-read the above verses in silence. The quiet can be difficult, but stay with it and meditate on the words and meanings. Allow yourself to just be curious as you read. What do the tension of Jesus' gruesome sacrificial death and our joyous celebration of resurrection mean to you?

If you are comfortable, share with your group what this experience was like, and what came up for you during those moments.

Resources: *If you are looking for a book that would personally challenge you to look into the evidence of the resurrection, check out “Case for Christ” or “Case for Easter” by Lee Strobel. He views the events of Jesus’ life through the eyes of a journalist and helps answer some difficult questions regarding the historical evidence of Jesus Christ death and resurrection.*

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles we all face.

T O G O

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.