

**“Why Easter Gives us Hope”
1 Peter 1:3**

Big Idea - Easter gives us hope both before and beyond the grave.

1 Peter 1:3 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In God’s great mercy he has caused us to be born again into a living hope, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead.”

ILLUS. A S.S. teacher was asking her class of 8 year olds what they thought the first words of Jesus were when he came out of the tomb. Long silence, finally a loquacious little girl said excitedly, “I know, I know!” Ok, Susie, what was it? Susie jumped up, threw her arms out up in the air and yelled, “TA DA!”

ILLUS. The story of a youth pastor who was speaking to teens. “Jesus died and rose for you!” Someone spoke up and said, “SO?!” That’s the way a lot of people go through Easter – Jesus died and rose. . . SO?

Today, I’m here to give you the “so what.” Easter gives HOPE for your life!

Hope is a powerful thing!

ILLUS Rats: A scientific study was done - two groups of rats were put into water and had to swim to stay alive. One group was left in and never taken out. They drowned in about 1 hour. The other group, every time they showed signs of being so tired they were going to drown, were taken out for a few seconds. Then they were placed back into the water again. Those rats kept swimming for almost 24 HOURS! Why? Because they had HOPE that they might be rescued!

If you’ve got hope, it will keep you through all kinds of difficulties in your life, because you know there’s hope on the other side of problems!

I’m here today to give you hope both for living and for dying!

1. A living hope because Jesus is alive

Matthew 28:6 “He is not here, for He is risen as He said...go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead...”

Satan thought he had won, he thought Jesus was down for the count and finished after the crucifixion! But God wasn't done yet, Satan didn't realize that it was Friday, but Sunday was coming! On the third day Christ arose conquering the grave and death! He's Alive!!

He lives to save us

Matthew 1:21 "...you will call His name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins."

Luke 24:46 "Jesus said...it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day.

47 It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.'"

Salvation and eternal life are the free gift of God, (Romans 6:23) says the "gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Because He's alive He can do it!

He lives to keep us

1 Peter 1:5 "...who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation..."

2 Timothy 1:12 "I know in Whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed unto Him until that day."

He not only keeps us saved, but He wants to give you His peace that passes all understanding

Philippians 4:7 "God's peace will keep/guard your heart and mind through Christ Jesus!"

He lives to guide us through life

Psalm 32:8 The LORD says, "I will make you wise and show you where to go. I will guide you and watch over you.

Exodus 15:13 With your unfailing love you lead the people you have redeemed. In your might, you guide them to your sacred home.

Psalm 32:8 The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.

Psalm 31:3 You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me.

How does He guide me?

James 1:5 says when you lack wisdom ask and God will give it to you.

He lives to take us home one day

Psalm 48:14 “For this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death.”

Psalm 73:24 “You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me *to* Glory.”

John 14:3 “I am going away to prepare a place for you...”

This great truth about Easter hope

2. Anchors us

Hebrews 6:18 “... we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us.

19 This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls.

We are living in a topsy-turvy unsettled world that has lost its way, lost its moorings, does not know what truth is! Jesus says “I am the truth!”

3. Anticipates/Assures/Guarantees the return of Jesus

Acts 1:11 “... why are you standing here looking into the sky? The same Jesus, whom you saw taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go up into heaven.”

Titus 2:13 “...looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming back to take all His children, the born again believers to be with Him forever. This is why the Gospel/good news is so important, why we need to share the hope filled message of Easter – Romans 10:9 – NOT BE ASHAMED.

If Jesus Christ is not alive, **nothing else** really matters. But if Jesus Christ is alive, nothing **but that** really matters. That's why the Easter message is for everyone today and is so vitally important.

Edith Burns was a wonderful Christian who lived in San Antonio, Texas. She was the patient of a born again doctor by the name of Will Phillips. Dr. Phillips was a gentle, kind doctor who saw patients as people. One of his favorite patients was Edith Burns.

One morning he went to his office with a heavy heart and it was because of Edith Burns. When he came by the waiting room, there sat Edith with her big black Bible in her lap earnestly talking to a young mother sitting beside her. Edith Burns had a habit of introducing herself in this way: "Hello, my name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" Then she would explain the meaning of Easter, and many times people would be saved. Dr. Phillips walked into that office and there he saw the head nurse, Beverly.

Beverly had first met Edith when she was taking her blood pressure. Edith began by saying, "My name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?"

Beverly said, "Why yes I do." Edith said, "Well, what do you believe about Easter?" Beverly said, "Well, it's all about egg hunts, going to church, and dressing up." Edith kept pressing her about the real meaning of Easter, and finally had led her to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

On this particular morning Dr. Phillips said to his head nurse, "Beverly, don't call Edith into the office quite yet. I believe there is another delivery taking place in the waiting room."

After a while Edith was called back into the doctor's office. Edith sat down and when she took a look at the doctor she said, "Dr. Will, why are you so sad? Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying?" Dr. Phillips said gently, "Yes Edith, please remember, I'm the doctor, and you're the patient." With a heavy heart he said, "Your lab report came back, and it says you have cancer, and Edith, you're not going to live very long."

Edith said, "Why Will Phillips, shame on you. Why are you so sad? Do you think God makes mistakes? You have just told me I'm going to see my precious Lord Jesus, my husband, and my friends. You have just told me that I am going to celebrate Easter forever, and here you are having difficulty giving me my ticket!"

Dr. Phillips thought to himself, "What a magnificent woman this Edith Burns is!" Edith continued to see Dr. Phillips weekly. Christmas came and the office was closed through January 3rd. On the day the office opened, Edith did not show up for her appointment. Later that afternoon, Edith called Dr. Phillips and said she would have to be moving her Easter story to the hospital and said, "Will, I'm very near home, so

would you make sure that they put women in here next to me in my room who need to know about Easter."

Well, they did just that and women began to come in and share that room with Edith. Many women were saved. Everybody on that floor from staff to patients were so excited about Edith, that they started calling her Edith Easter; that is everyone except Phyllis Cross, the head nurse. Phyllis made it plain that she wanted nothing to do with Edith because she was a "religious nut."

She had been a nurse in an army hospital. She had seen it all and heard it all. She was the original G.I. Jane. She had been married three times; she was hard, cold, and did everything by the book.

One morning the two nurses who usually attended to Edith were sick. As a result, Phyllis Cross had to go in and wait on Edith. When she walked in, Edith had a big smile on her face and said, "Phyllis, God loves you and I love you, and I have been praying for you."

Phyllis Cross said, "Well, you can quit praying for me, it won't work. I'm not interested." Edith said,

"Well, I will pray and I have asked God not to let me go home until you come into the family." Phyllis Cross said, "Then you will never die because that will never happen," and curtly walked out of the room.

For the next several days Phyllis Cross would walk into the room and Edith would say, "God loves you Phyllis and I love you, and I'm praying for you." One day Phyllis Cross said she was literally drawn to Edith's room like a magnet would draw iron. She sat down on the bed and Edith said, "I'm so glad you have come, because God told me that today is your special day."

Phyllis Cross said, "Edith, you have asked everybody here the question, 'Do you believe in Easter?' but you have never asked me." Edith said, "Phyllis, I wanted to many times, but God told me to wait until you asked, and now that you have asked."

Edith Burns took her Bible and shared with Phyllis Cross the Easter Story of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Edith said, "Phyllis, do you believe in Easter? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is alive and that He wants to live in your heart?" Phyllis Cross said, "Oh I want to believe that with all of my heart, and I do want Jesus in my life." Right there, Phyllis Cross prayed and invited Jesus Christ into her heart.

Two days later, Phyllis Cross came in and Edith said, "Do you know what day it is?" Phyllis Cross said, "Why Edith, it's Good Friday." Edith said, "Oh, no, not for the believer - every day is Easter. Happy Easter Phyllis!"

Two days later, on Easter Sunday, Phyllis Cross came into work, did some of her duties and then went down to the flower shop and got some Easter lilies because she wanted to go up to see Edith and give her some Easter lilies and wish her a Happy Easter. When she walked into Edith's room, Edith was in bed. Her big black Bible was on her lap. Her hands were in that Bible. There was a sweet smile on her face.

When Phyllis Cross went to pick up Edith's hand, she realized Edith was gone. Her left-hand index finger was on John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many mansions....."

Phyllis Cross took one look at that body, and then lifted her face toward heaven, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, said, "Happy Easter, Edith - Happy Easter!" Phyllis Cross left Edith's body, walked out of the room, and over to a table where two student nurses were sitting. She said, "My name is Phyllis Cross. Do you believe in Easter?"

What happened to Phyllis Cross? She got pardoned, and she got a purpose and she got hope – the hope of Easter, for now and for eternity, for living and for dying!!

Psalm 23:6 "Surely goodness and mercy follows me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."