



Bulletin

APRIL
2023

A PUBLICATION OF FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®

Hope Springs Eternal!

PARADOX OF GOOD FRIDAY

BY JIM DALY

GOOD FRIDAY IS A PARADOX. BECAUSE LIFE IS A PARADOX.

Charles Dickens got it exactly right in his opening sentence to *A Tale of Two Cities* when he wrote, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.”

Those iconic words, written over 150 years ago, could have been written this morning. Civilizations rise and fall, but every generation faces the same fundamental paradoxes: Love and hate. Wealth and poverty. Good and evil. Existential opposites that have always been with us. And always will be.

The dark side of Good Friday openly acknowledges that humanity suffers. Sometimes unfairly. Good people die tragically, and bad people live long, prosperous lives. Logic and certainty get turned on their heads, and we’re confronted with the hard, cold reality that things don’t always work the way we want them to.

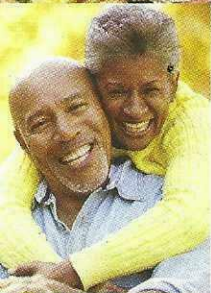
But hang on. Don’t abandon hope just yet. There’s a reason it’s called Good Friday, after all. It reminds us that Jesus Christ can bring beauty out of brokenness, joy out of suffering and life out of death.

To paraphrase Dickens, Good Friday turns seasons of darkness into seasons of light, winters of despair into springs of hope.

Life overcoming death. Redemption instead of judgment.

That’s the paradox of Good Friday.

Want to know more? Visit www.focusonthefamily.com.





THE MIRACLE CLAIM OF THE RESURRECTION

If I told you my coffee mug walked around my computer on its own this morning, you would rightly question the truth of that claim. Many skeptics, however, would say the claim of the Resurrection is no different than a claim of a walking coffee mug—they're both unreasonable beliefs without evidence. It's important to understand that the Resurrection is an entirely different kind of miracle claim for two reasons.

First, it's a miracle claim with significant historical evidence. The vast majority of scholars who study the resurrection—including non-Christians—agree that Jesus' disciples (1) claimed the risen Jesus appeared to them and (2) were transformed from fearful individuals who abandoned Him at His execution into bold proclaimers of the Resurrection. The historical evidence shows that they were willing to suffer and die to proclaim the message that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Second, whereas a walking coffee mug would be a miraculous event with no apparent purpose, the Resurrection was a miraculous event in a theological context where we might even *expect* God to act. With that context in mind, you should

understand that:

Jesus' resurrection validated His claims to divinity. No mere human can choose to be resurrected. Only someone who is truly God, and therefore has power over death, can do that. The Resurrection was the ultimate validation of who Jesus claimed to be—the Messiah Himself.

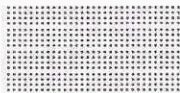
Jesus' resurrection confirmed we are no longer in our sins. Acts 17:30-31 says the resurrection is "proof" that God has "set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed" (NIV). Those who trust in Jesus' sacrifice for their sins will be found righteous on that day (Romans 8:1).

Jesus' resurrection assures us that we, too, will be raised from the dead. Jesus' resurrection is God's "pledge" that we will be raised from death to eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

Given these points, it's evident why Paul said that our faith is useless if Jesus has not been raised. But because Jesus *was* raised from the dead, we can place our faith in Him as Lord and Savior with the full confidence that we will inherit eternal life. The truth of Easter changes *everything*.

—*Natasha Cruin*

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT EASTER



Your kids may ask, “Why did Jesus die?” Here is a handy acronym that helps explain it: **SAVE**.

S—Sin Separated Us from God

The Bible tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Every person has done things that are wrong. Because we sin, we are separated from God, who is perfect. And here’s the really bad news: God’s Word tells us the penalty for our sin is death (Romans 6:23). But there is hope because . . .

A—A Way to God Was Made

Despite our sin, God had a master plan to bring us back to Him. Since the wages of sin is death, a sacrifice had to be made to make things right. The problem was, there was nothing we could do to fix things between God and us. That’s why Jesus came to Earth—to live a perfect, sinless life so He could be that sacrifice. Isaiah 53:5 says that by Jesus’ wounds we are healed. And because of His sacrifice, we have . . .

V—Victory Through Jesus

Jesus’ death isn’t the end of the story. He rose from the dead because He is God, and God is more powerful than death! This is the Easter story—Christ’s resur-

rection. Although we have all sinned, we can be redeemed and brought back to God because of Jesus’ death and resurrection! In John 16:33, Jesus tells us He has overcome the world and all the bad that comes with it. He invites us to join Him—all we have to do is say yes and give our life to Him! And when we do, we will have . . .

E—Eternal Life for Those Who Believe

Talk about John 3:16 with your child:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to die for our sins. This was God’s master plan, and it worked flawlessly! When we accept Jesus as Lord and give our hearts to Him, we are saved. That means we will spend the rest of forever with God, which is what He wanted all along!

And that’s the reason behind Jesus’ resurrection story. He died because He loved us and wanted to save us. And He rose again because there is nothing in existence more powerful than He is. If we believe in Jesus, that is the God we will spend eternity with!

—*Emerson Collins*



LIVE IT CHALLENGE

Exploring Easter

April is a special month when we remember the death and resurrection of Christ, a crucial moment in Christian history. This Easter, explore the depth of the Resurrection through Focus on the Family's short lesson series, then try one of our fun activities with your friends and family!

What Is Easter All About?

The Bible never actually mentions the word "Easter," so why do Christians everywhere celebrate it? Well, the holiday represents the coming of spring, and with it, new life and rebirth. You might have been exposed to the Easter bunny and Easter eggs. Both are symbols of new life and life bearing. However, the two themes of new life and new birth take on their greatest meaning within Christianity—namely, Christ and His resurrection from death on the cross (Luke 24), and the new life and rebirth He has brought to those who repent of their sin and believe in Him (Mark 1:15).

It is important to understand Easter from a Christian worldview and not become too distracted by the festivities of it all. To enjoy Easter purely for the candy and activities would be like going to a birthday party for the cake and neglecting who the cake is really for. Easter activities can bring about happiness, closeness with family and love, but without an acknowledgment of Christ, His sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection, we can miss the core of our celebration.

This month's Live It Challenge is to explore the true meaning of Easter with your family! To help you do that, we have created five lessons for you to go through with your family!

Sign up for the April Live It Challenge today and learn more about the true meaning of Easter. Be sure to encourage your friends and church youth or children's ministries to join you! To sign up or for more information, just use this QR code.



For more information on any of the topics in this bulletin, go to FocusOnTheFamily.com or call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). To reach Customer Service regarding your subscription, please call 1-800-692-9912. To check out more ministry resources, please visit us at www.tyndaleperiodicals.com.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY BULLETIN (ISSN 0897-537X), vol. 36, no. 4, APRIL 2023. Jim Ruskak, editor; Shirley Ree, designer. Published monthly by Tyndale House Publishers, 351 Executive Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188 in cooperation with Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO. © 2023 Focus on the Family. Focus on the Family and the accompanying logo and design are federally registered trademarks of Focus on the Family, 8605 Explorer Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1994, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Cover image of Charles Dickens: 1860 Public Domain. Image of wedding hands © Tatsrv | Dreamstime.com. Image of older couple © Monkey Business Images | Dreamstime.com. Image of little girl © Famveldman | Dreamstime.com. Image of empty tomb © Kevin Carden | Dreamstime.com. Image of children © Monkey Business Images | Dreamstime.com. Subscription \$16.00 per month per 100 copies. Canada: \$18.00 per month per 100 copies, payable in Canadian funds. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Focus on the Family, Subscription Services, P. O. Box 405, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.