



# Central Peninsula Church

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2 Timothy 2:8  
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## Never Forget

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### *Easter Sunday*

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Sometimes the most important thing we cannot forget to do is to remember. We've all heard about people who don't remember well. We've heard about "senior moments," and perhaps we've had a few. We've heard about absent-minded professors, but most of us have never met one. There have been plenty of times, sitting in class, when MY mind was absent, but never the professor's.

A professor was having breakfast with his family. His wife said to him, "Now remember. This is the day we move. When you come home, go to the NEW house and not to this one." All day he knew there was something he was supposed to remember, but he forgot what it was. He went home after class and the house was empty.

"Oh yeah, we moved," he said to himself. "I wonder where we moved to?"

He saw some children playing in the yard. He said to the little boy, "Do you know the people who used to live here?"

The boy said, "Yes, sir."

He said, "Do you know where they moved?"

The little boy replied, "Mom said you would forget."

Sometimes remembering is a matter of life and death. Wars have been won because people remembered. In 1836 a group of Americans made a heroic stand against a much larger army during the war for Texan independence. This took place in a fort called the Alamo, in San Antonio, Texas. Eventually, all those Americans were killed, including Davy Crockett. But years later, Texans rallied under the battle cry, "Remember the Alamo!" and fought to gain their independence from Mexico.

Again, in 1898, the U.S. battleship Maine

mysteriously exploded and sank in the harbor of Havana, Cuba. Later, the American public blamed the sinking of the ship on Spain, which owned Cuba. President William McKinley declared war and Americans rallied under the cry, "Remember the Maine!"

Sometimes remembering is a matter of survival. Maybe that's why the Apostle Paul, in the last letter he ever wrote, said to his young protégé, Timothy, in 2 Timothy 2:8, "**Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel...**"

Like a soldier about to breathe his last on the battle field, the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, "I want you to remember something. I want you to remember something that is vital; something you cannot afford to forget. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead."

Easter is a time for all of us to remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

### **I. We should remember because it is a fact of history.**

To remember that is to remember not some kind of hopeful myth, but a fact of history.

The most successful trial attorney in the history of the world is Sir Lionel Luckhoo. In July of 1985 he won his 245th consecutive murder acquittal. You would suspect that he is a very bright person with tremendous analytical skills. He certainly must be a world class expert on what constitutes reliable and admissible evidence. What would a man like that say about the resurrection? During his own spiritual journey, he used his own expertise in law to walk through the question of whether the resurrection could stand up to the test of legal evidence. He finally concluded with these words: "*I say unequivocally that the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it...leaves*

*absolutely no room for doubt.”*

We should remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, not because the moral of the story might give us some kind of faint hope that good might come out of bad, like one of Aesop's fables, but because it's true, and since it's true, we know that everything Jesus said about himself was true as well.

## **II. We should remember because it confirms Jesus' claim to be the Son of God.**

You see, it's not just an event we're to remember, it's a person. He doesn't say to remember the resurrection, he says to remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. The resurrection of Christ says something about the person of Christ. His life, his deeds and his teaching are authenticated by his resurrection.

Jesus was incredibly humble, but he made audacious claims. He said that to know him is to know God; to see him is to see God; to believe in him is to believe in God; to receive him is to receive God; to hate him is to hate God; and to honor him is to honor God.

On one occasion he was arguing with some fellow Jews and he said, "If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." This was too much for his critics. They came back at him, "Are you saying you are greater than our father, Abraham, who died? Who do you think you are?" Then Jesus made one of the most monumental claims he ever made. He said, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I AM." The Bible says that immediately they picked up rocks to throw at him. Why did they do that? Because stoning was the penalty for blasphemy. He didn't just say he existed before Abraham, he called himself, "I AM," which every Jew knew was the name of God; the name that God revealed to Moses at the burning bush. Jesus was claiming to be one and the same as God.

I suppose anyone could make that claim. I

could claim that about myself this morning, but you wouldn't believe me. Why should we believe Jesus? Because the resurrection was God the Father's exclamation point on Jesus' claim to be God the Son. Romans 1:4 says he was "**declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.**" How do we know that Barry Bonds is one of the greatest home run hitters in history? Because he has 618 home runs to back that claim up. How do we know Jesus is the Son of God? Because he rose from the dead.

But what does this mean for you and for me?

## **III. We should remember because we have a tendency to forget amidst our own suffering.**

The fact is there are times in each of our lives that we have a tendency to forget.

Paul understood this. The situation he found himself in couldn't have been more different than that first bright and glorious Easter morning when the women visited the tomb of Jesus and found it empty. When Paul wrote this letter 30 years later he was sitting in the damp darkness of a Roman prison cell, awaiting trial and execution. He was old, beaten and worn down. All of his friends had deserted him. He knew his time was about up.

Timothy's situation wasn't much better than Paul's. He was trying to bring leadership to a small band of new believers in the port city of Ephesus. Ephesus was a lot like San Francisco. It was a melting pot of beliefs and cultures, some of which were not at all friendly to the cause of Christ. Some of the people in Timothy's own church would just as well have run him out of town. These were not the brightest days to be a follower of Christ. Paul and Timothy were in a battle.

There are times in our lives that are like that. There are times when our lives resemble Good Friday a lot more than Easter Sunday. There are times when the darkness of the cross overshadows the brightness of the resurrection. It's in those times that we need to remember Jesus Christ, crucified - yes; but on the third day risen from the dead!

A story is told about how the news of the battle of

Waterloo came to England. There were no telegrams in those days, but everyone knew that Wellington was facing Napoleon in a great battle. All of England waited for news from the battlefield. To deliver that news, a ship would signal news to a man on top of Winchester Cathedral, who would then signal to another man on a hill. That's how news of the battle was relayed to London and all over England. When the battle was over, the ship came in, and the man on board signaled the word, "*Wellington.*" The next word he signaled was "*defeated.*" But at that very moment the fog rolled in and the ship couldn't be seen. The horrible news, "*Wellington defeated*" went all across England, and there was gloom all across the country. But after about three hours, the fog lifted, and the signal came again, "*Wellington defeated the enemy.*" Then all England rejoiced.

On Good Friday, when the Son of God's lifeless corpse hung still on a Roman cross, it appeared as if all that was good and right was defeated. There are times in our lives when the fog of sin and evil and despair is so thick that that's all we can see. A loved one is diagnosed with a terminal illness. A daughter runs away from home. The pain of divorce. We lose our job and suffer long term unemployment. It's in those times that we need to remember Jesus Christ, not just hanging on a cross, or lying in a tomb, but risen from the dead. It's in those times we need to remember that there is One who has gone before us in apparent defeat, but on the third day he rose again!

#### **IV. We should remember because it assures us of his living presence with us today.**

When we remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, we're not just remembering an event, we're remembering one who is present with us today. As one who lives with us today, there's no obstacle or enemy that is too great for him to conquer. We don't just have a memory, we have the the power of a presence. There are times in life when we're facing something we know is far greater than we could possibly handle ourselves. But the one who looks to a risen Lord knows he's not alone.

David Livingstone, in the last century, said, "I go through the jungles of Africa and Jesus is by my side."

Savonarola, that great preacher of the 12th century in Florence, said, "They may kill me, they may tear me in pieces, but never, never, never shall they tear from my heart the living Jesus."

Samuel Rutherford, one of the great Scottish Covenanters, put in jail for his faith in the 17th century said, "Jesus Christ came into my cell yesterday and every stone shone like a jewel."

Those are men who have learned to "remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead." They faced their problems and battles with an inner impartation of strength, grace, and comfort that they would never have had without his living presence.

Before Jesus died, he said to his disciples, "It is to your advantage that I'm going away. Because if I go I will send you my Spirit. And my Spirit will take what is mine and make them real to you. He will be another Helper." When fears threaten, when doubts assail, when inadequacy depresses, remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, alive and present for you today.

#### **V. We should remember because it reminds us that if we endure we will one day reign with him.**

You see, this is really a battle cry. This is a call to all those who are facing enemies far too great for you to handle on your own. It's a call to remember that the One who went before us had to suffer too. He faced disappointment; he faced unfair treatment; he faced ruthless enemies. Think about the moment Jesus was hanging from the cross. Here was the brightest and the best of all the ages. Here was the Son of God. But now he was in a situation that was as God forsaken as any human situation could be. He himself felt forsaken, let down, abandoned by his own Father. He cried out, "Why?" but God was silent. But just when it appeared that sin and evil and death would overcome that which is good, he rose from the dead. God WAS there. God

DID answer. He CAME THROUGH. The impossible became a reality.

You see, it's not a defeat we remember; it's a victory; it's a crown; it's a happy ending. And his victory is our victory. If we believe him, if we follow him, if we suffer with him, his crown will be our crown. That's why Paul says just a few verses down from this one, "For if we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; (but) if we deny him, he will deny us." When we remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, we're choosing not to deny him, not to bail out when the following gets hard, but to endure with him so we can one day reign with him. In essence, we're choosing to live in hope.

I can't help but think of those 7 POW's in Iraq. Captured and beaten by their enemies, they must have felt like giving up. It must have been hard to keep hope alive. Deep down many of their loved ones, and most of us, thought for sure they were dead. But there were people who didn't give up, and when the opportunity came, what once seemed unlikely, if not impossible, became a reality.

## **CONCLUSION**

Sometimes the most important thing we cannot forget to do is to remember. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, because that's what will keep hope alive in the midst of what seems to be a hopeless situation.

For some of you, followers of Christ, that will mean choosing to stay put whatever suffering or hardship or sacrifice you have to make to keep on following him. It might mean staying in a tough marriage. It might mean risking the loss of friendship or employment because of your commitment to truth. It might giving up your right to be right and reaching out in forgiveness to someone who has wronged you. It might mean choosing to live in joy despite the fact that you miss your son who was taken from your side

far too soon. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. Your pain, your sorrow, is real, but it won't have the last word.

For some of you, this will mean that for the first time in your life you choose to believe that which you thought was impossible. In a sense you choose to believe that which you thought was too good to be true; that there IS a happy ending, even for you, and it comes through Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me shall live even if he dies." Do you believe? Do you believe enough to enter the battle, to identify yourself with him despite the cost, because you know that with him, and only with him, there is hope?

Sometimes the most important thing we cannot forget to do is to remember.

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