



Happy Easter everyone! I am so glad we could gather together to celebrate what I believe is one of the most significant events in all of history—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ rose from the dead, billions of people globally have gathered to proclaim the same wonderful and powerful hope on Easter: “Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.” How does a worldwide phenomenon like this occur?

We heard the Faith Story of Erik this morning. How does a person change from being a critical, judgmental person to being loving, kind and gracious? Five weeks after Jesus Christ rose from the dead, history records that over 10,000 Jews were following him and claiming that he was and forever will be the Lord.

Consider this: in order for this to happen, each of these 10,000 people had to abandon thousands of years of tightly held cultural and spiritual traditions: animal sacrifices, following the 10 Commandments, a Saturday Sabbath and an Earthly-King Messiah. These are the very things that made a Jew a Jew. Holding tenaciously to these four distinctions has kept Judaism alive until today, while all other Ancient Near Eastern cultures have vanished. Each of those 10,000 converts must have experienced something dramatic. How does a change like this occur?

I believe these kinds of changes occur when a person encounters the risen Savior, Jesus Christ. The result is, quite simply, radical. Radical isn't a Bible word, it's my word. The Bible has many words to describe this change. One of them is Wake Up! *“Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you”* (Ephesians 5:14).

Throughout scripture the concept of sleeping and waking up is used for both physical and spiritual death. That was certainly in the mind of the author of the song we sang this morning, “Awake, awake, awake my soul. God resurrect these bones. From death to life, for you alone. Awake my soul.”

Wake up!

To awaken from a spiritual slumber.

To awaken from spiritual death death to spiritual life.

To awaken from confusion to clarity.

To awaken from conflict to peace.

To awaken from sluggishness.

To awaken from boredom.

To awaken from compromise.

To wake up.

To see how we can be woken up, turn to Luke 8:40–56.

**Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Then a man**

named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.”

But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” he said. “Don't bother the teacher anymore.” Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, “Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”

When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. “Stop wailing,” Jesus said. “She is not dead but asleep.” They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and said, “My child, get up!” Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

What an amazing story. Let's make a connection from this story to what I was talking about in the beginning, a spiritual awakening. In this story Jesus performed two miraculous miracles in the physical realm. He healed two broken bodies: Bleeding/no bleeding; dead/alive. But this was not the only miracle that occurred here. Both Jarius and the woman had a spiritual awakening too.

And that's where the connection to a spiritual awakening is for each of us. I think everyone wants to be awoken spiritually. I think everyone's life would be better if we had less confusion, sluggishness, boredom, or compromise. I think everyone's life would be better if we had a relationship with Jesus that was more than the one you have today. You'll be glad to know that this passage from Luke 8 offers us a blueprint for a spiritual awakening.

### Three Steps to a Spiritual Awakening

#### Despite obstacles, we come to Jesus

Jarius and the bleeding woman had major obstacles to overcome in order to come to Jesus. So do we. Jarius had to overcome the obstacle of **independence**. He would have been a guy who said, "I can handle this myself." And maybe this had worked for his entire life, until he faced the looming death of his 12-year-old daughter.

My friend John from Manhattan Beach was like this. He was rich. He had a house by the beach. He had a beautiful wife, an untouchable career and two good boys. Then he learned of his wife's affair with her tennis coach. His mantra of "I can handle this myself" no longer worked for him, which led him to my office, giving his life to Jesus. There will be a point in each person's life when they will realize that they can't handle everything. They need God. Some have to get over the obstacle of independence. Perhaps you relate to that.

The bleeding woman had to overcome the obstacle of **shame**. She would have been a woman who said, "I don't deserve. I am worthless." This is why Jesus asked her to come out of hiding in the crowd, listened patiently to her long story and addressed her as "Daughter" at the end. He had healed her body but he also wanted to address the shame she felt about herself.

If there are obstacles blocking your way to Jesus today, don't let them stop you. Because the first step toward a Spiritual Awakening is to come to Jesus.

#### We expose ourselves fully

From the story, it's obvious how both Jarius and the bleeding woman did this. They got to the point of no longer caring if people thought they were undignified, desperate, crazy or weird.

Being exposed fully is scary because we are vulnerable to being judged. People might talk about you saying, "did you hear ...". All of us are looking for validation from others, words and reactions that say, "You are doing well. Great job. Well done." So exposing ourselves fully risks hearing that maybe we're not doing well. Maybe we are a mess. Maybe we need more help than we've even admitted to ourselves.

Imagine your life is like a house. You've taken the first step and come to him. That's like inviting Jesus to come live in your house. You are excited to welcome him in and since he's Jesus, you're going to let him be in charge, since he is God. You take him on a

tour of the house, since you've lived there your whole life. You show him the ins and the outs. At the end of the tour Jesus asks about a room he wasn't shown that has a locked door. This is an awkward moment because you weren't prepared to give Jesus access to **that** room. That room has your secrets in it.

Keeping secrets and holding anything back from Jesus will prevent us from having a Spiritual Awakening. And it's here that many people get stuck. They are so afraid to expose everything, so they don't. Here's the great news about Jesus: When we expose ourselves fully to Jesus, he always responds with loving truth. He is trustworthy. He is safe. My philosophy has been, "He knows it all anyway, so I might as well fess up."

If there is anything you are holding back from Jesus today, why not fully expose yourself to him? That's the second step to a Spiritual Awakening.

#### Believe that Jesus can

Can what? I intentionally left this phrase unfinished so each of you could finish it. Believe that Jesus can change whatever part of you that needs it. Both the woman and Jarius knew their specific problem. What would you say is yours? If Jesus were going to bring change and improvement to 1, 2 or 3 areas of your life—to bring an Awakening to your life—what would those areas be? As the third step in a Spiritual Awakening, identify with as much specifics as you can the areas in your life where you need him to change you and believe that he can do it. Have the faith.

I suspect that many of you identified an area that you'd like Jesus to change. However, if you're having trouble coming up with an answer, a helpful tool of examination is the Fruit of the Spirit, found in Galatians 6. Simply ask yourself, "Am I a \_\_\_\_\_ person?", filling in the blank with one of the nine fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness or self-control. I've always found this a revealing experience.

The concept of Awakening is so good because we resonate with waking up, every day. We expect to wake up at least 365 times in the next year, more times if you take naps! When we apply this to our spiritual lives, it appropriately sets the expectation that we can have a Spiritual Awakening every day. Each day this year can involve new spiritual growth. Each day this year can involve fresh spiritual insight. Each day this year can involve a closer relationship with Jesus.

Now imagine that all of us are Awakened. All of us are coming to Jesus, exposing ourselves fully and believing that he can. Can you imagine how that would spill out onto other people? Can you imagine how this affects the lives of your family, your co-workers, your neighbors and your friends? Personal Spiritual Awakening is the first domino to fall before revival breaks out in a city.

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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