

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

Messages of the Resurrection

How does each sermon connect to this theme?

Throughout our sermons in the month of March, each action of Jesus took place in view of the cross, overshadowing our journey through the season of Lent. Now, in the month of April, each sermon gleams with victory as we explore **messages of the resurrection**.

April 3, Good Friday: The Gospel of John focuses on the divinity and glory of Christ, even in His death on the cross. We will come to understand how Jesus' last words, *"It is finished!"* are best understood as a victory cry.

April 5, Easter Sunday: At the tomb on Easter morning, Mary's encounter with Christ reveals how to let go of what was, as He prompts her by saying, *"Do not cling to Me."* The resurrection didn't change only Jesus, but all believers as well - *We are resurrecting now!*

April 12: Jesus comes to His disciples saying, *"Peace be with you,"* as He comforts and commissions them.

April 19: Jesus teaches us to share His gospel with others by placing it in the open where they may *"See the light."* Beyond only seeing His word, we must value it and reflect it in our lives.

April 26: As the disciples learned to continue without Jesus on the earth they are encouraged to *"Become followers"* of what is good, and live without fear, even in the face of slander and suffering

As we move through the Gospel of John in Holy Week and into Eastertide, I encourage you to deeply read this book of the Bible and experience Christ as the divine, victorious *Logos* who is glorified in death and resurrection. All things were created through Him in the beginning, and with His resurrection Jesus initiates the new creation to come.

May His grace and truth illuminate these holy days of celebration.



John S. Schnabel

APRIL 2026

April 3 GOOD FRIDAY

Messages of the
Resurrection
"It is finished!"

April 5 EASTER SUNDAY

Messages of the
Resurrection
"Do not cling to Me"

April 12
Messages of the
Resurrection
"Peace be with you"

April 19
Messages of the
Resurrection
"See the light"

April 26
Messages of the
Resurrection
"Become followers"

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR APRIL 3

MESSAGES OF THE RESURRECTION:

“It is finished!”

Where are we in the Bible?

Each Gospel in the New Testament focuses on different aspects of who Jesus is. In the Gospel of John, which will be the source of our texts for the next few Sundays, the author highlights Jesus' divinity and glory. From the perspective of the Gospel of John, Jesus is glorified, even in His death. In this account, the cry of God forsaking Him, found in Matthew 27 and Mark 15, is not included. His Father has not abandoned Him, and Their unity is not severed. The resurrection and ascension are implicit in the victory cry “*It is finished!*” From this perspective, we can find messages of resurrection, even on Good Friday. The word *tetelestai* in Greek, translated as “*It is finished!*” can have multiple meanings beyond completion. It can indeed mean finished or completed, but also accomplished, fulfilled, and an action that has ongoing effects. This Good Friday sermon will expand on these different meanings to unfold the full meaning of this holy day.

Summary:

When Jesus declares, “It is finished,” we behold not an ending but the triumphant completion of God’s saving work - fulfilled in Christ, accomplished for the world, and continuing in us until His victory is fully revealed. In that moment, Scripture reaches its fulfillment, His mission is accomplished, and His suffering is brought to its appointed end—not as coincidence, but as the necessary path of salvation history in which the Son of God became human to defeat death through His own death and inaugurate the new covenant. Yet the effects of His sacrifice endure, extending to the living and the dead alike, as His finished work continues to unfold until all things are brought to completion in Him.

GOOD FRIDAY

John 19:30

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Bible Reading

Mark 15:22-39

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

John 18-19

Catechism

3.4.9, 2.2.1

Discussion Questions

The Gospel of John presents Jesus' death as a moment of glory and victory rather than defeat. How does this perspective change the way you think about Good Friday?

Jesus' path to the cross was not a coincidence but the fulfillment of Scripture and God's plan. Why is it important for your faith to understand that Jesus' death was intentional and necessary?

What does Jesus' cry, “It is finished,” mean personally for your faith and your life right now?

When asked: “What has God started in you that needs to be finished?” What comes to mind for you?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR APRIL 5

Where are we in the Bible?

We are at the climactic turning point and closing movement of the gospel according to John, following the passion narrative of chapters 18–19 (Good Friday service), where Jesus has been crucified, died, and buried. Jesus has been presented as the incarnate Word, the Lamb of God, and the one who reveals the Father. Now, on *“the first day of the week,”* the narrative shifts from death to resurrection. The setting is the garden near the tomb, echoing creation imagery that has framed the gospel from its opening verses. Mary Magdalene’s encounter with the risen Christ marks the beginning of the resurrection appearances and signals the start of a new creation reality. Historically, we are in first-century Judea under Roman occupation; theologically, we stand at the decisive moment where the glory of God is revealed not in suffering alone, but in triumph over death. Spiritually, we stand at the threshold of an encounter with the risen Christ on this Easter Sunday!

Summary:

The resurrection invites us to move beyond clinging to the past and to step into the new life Christ offers. As we live and share the power of His resurrection, we trust that all souls will encounter Him personally, as our role is to faithfully bear witness to all. The resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms His divine Sonship and the truth of the gospel, stands as the foundation of our faith, and sends us out with a message of hope, calling us to share the joy of the resurrection with our neighbors as its life-giving effects continue in the world.

MESSAGES OF THE RESURRECTION: “Do not cling to me.”

EASTER SUNDAY

John 20:17-18

Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

Bible Reading

Mark 16:1-15

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

John 20:1-18

Catechism

12.5.4, 8.2.8, 5.3.4.4

Discussion Questions

The resurrection is described not only as an event to remember but a reality to embody. What does it look like, in practical terms, to "live the resurrection" in daily life?

The service highlights that defeat no longer has the final word. How does this truth challenge the way we view suffering, failure, or discouragement?

How is God calling you to move from comfort into commission—where might He be sending you to share your faith?

When you share your faith, how do you respond when others doubt or do not believe? How can you remain faithful in simply bearing witness?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR APRIL 12

Where are we in the Bible?

Our Bible verses for this sermon are a continuation of the verses that served as the foundation for Easter Sunday (20:17-18). This gives special significance to the word “then” at the beginning of verse 19, and serves to create a bridge between the two Sundays. This appearance of the risen Jesus to His disciples is the first of three outlined in the Gospel of John (see 20:24-31 and 21:1-22), and it includes four notable themes: fear (20:19), Jesus’ bestowal of peace (20:19,21), sending and being sent (20:21), and the gift of the Holy Spirit (20:22).

It’s important that we put ourselves into this story so that we understand the significance of Jesus’ greeting of peace. It is now the evening of the day of resurrection. The doors are shut, implying that the disciples have not believed Mary’s report (20:18) and have not gone looking for Jesus, but are still in hiding. They’re dominated by fear. This fear is justified, as the collusion between the religious authorities and the Roman Empire has destroyed Jesus, and the disciples have every reason to expect that they will be found guilty by association. It’s into this fear and confusion-filled setting that the Risen Lord enters.

Summary:

With a few seemingly simple words, the Risen Lord transformed the disciples’ confusion into clarity and fear into joy, while also equipping them with divine power and inspiration to fulfill their new calling. This same victorious and overcoming peace is extended to us today so that we can also be committed to continuing His cause. At first the disciples were deeply unsettled and even good news could not lift their despair, but in encountering the Risen Lord their outlook was fundamentally changed—His peace first transforming their fear into joy, and then equipping them to move from joy into mission.

MESSAGES OF THE RESURRECTION: “Peace be with you”

John 20:19-20

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture
John 20:1-23

Catechism
12.1.8.8

Discussion Questions

Where in your life do you feel like the disciples behind locked doors—fearful, uncertain, or stuck?

Jesus enters into a locked room and speaks peace. What does this reveal about how Christ meets you in your fear and confusion today?

Do you tend to think of peace as comfort only, or also as something that prepares you for action? Why?

The service distinguishes between worldly peace and the peace of Christ. How would you describe the difference, and why does it matter?

How does the gift of the Holy Spirit connect to the peace Jesus gives and the mission He assigns?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR APRIL 19

MESSAGES OF THE RESURRECTION:

“See the light”

Where are we in the Bible?

Our verse is from the early ministry of Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 8, Jesus is traveling from town to town proclaiming the kingdom of God. He has just told the Parable of the Sower, explaining how differently people receive the word. Luke 8:16 follows that teaching. After describing the word as seed, Jesus now describes the word as light. The emphasis shifts from hearing rightly to living visibly. Discipleship is not only reception of truth, but reflection of it in daily life.

As is evident in Jesus’ teaching on the sower and the light, He often used simple metaphors and illustrations to reveal profound truths about God’s kingdom. Each example reveals a different aspect. By using everyday imagery like seeds, pearls, and sheep, He made complex spiritual concepts memorable, engaging, and personal, compelling listeners to engage their imaginations, and giving them different avenues for grasping the truth of the kingdom.

Summary:

In Luke 8:16, Jesus calls believers to live visibly transformed lives. Enlightened by His word, we first see the light—the presence, truth, and saving power of God revealed in Christ—then learn to value it as our greatest treasure, and finally reflect it through faithful, authentic witness, for this light was never meant to be hidden. As we follow Christ and bear His light now, we look toward the new creation, where He Himself will be the light that no darkness can ever extinguish.

Luke 8:16

No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light.

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

Luke 8:4-21

Catechism

3.4.8.6

Discussion Questions

Where do you most clearly "see the light" in your life right now (the divine service, Scripture, worship, prayer, fellowship, etc.)?

Reflecting the light is not performative or about drawing attention to ourselves. What is the difference between performative faith and reflective faith?

What are some ways people might unintentionally hide or dim the light in their lives?

What does "valuing the light" look like in your priorities, time, and decisions?

SERMON SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

BASED ON THE DIVINE SERVICE GUIDE FOR APRIL 26

MESSAGES OF THE RESURRECTION:

“Become followers”

Where are we in the Bible?

In 1 Peter, believers are reminded that they have been richly blessed through salvation and a future inheritance in Christ (ch. 1), and therefore are called to live as God’s people by praising Him (ch. 2), serving one another with their gifts (ch. 4), and willingly enduring suffering. Even in suffering, God is with them, and they are called to follow Christ’s example by responding to evil with good (ch. 3).

Our verse for this sermon poses a question based on the preceding verses in 1 Peter 3 which expound on the necessity of doing good. While verses 8-12 call the reader to do good, verses 13-17 address the questions of what happens to people who “*become followers of what is good*” when difficulties arise. The suffering endured by the recipients of this letter seems to lead to social shame and not to death. These Christians have lost social status due to slander and ridicule, and are experiencing shame. However, 1 Peter reverses this shame. Usually shame falls on those who are being slandered, but these verses shame those who are doing the slandering. In the face of the good works engaged in by the Christian community, their accusers will be revealed as false and malicious.

Summary:

In a world that may answer goodness with shame or slander, we are called to follow Christ with a passionate love for what is good - unafraid, anchored in a community of faith, clear in conscience, and confident that God’s blessing and truth will ultimately reveal His goodness through us. As followers of Jesus Christ, our example, we are called to do good, strengthened and equipped in the divine services to overcome evil with good.

1 Peter 3:13

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

FOUNDATIONAL READINGS:

Scripture

1 Peter 3:13-17

Catechism

13.2.2

Discussion Questions

When you face frustration, criticism, or unfair treatment, what is usually your first response? How might Christ be calling you to respond differently?

What does "do not be afraid" mean in your life right now? What fears might be holding you back from doing what is right?

How does the Christian understanding of "blessing" differ from the way the world usually understands blessing?

What does it mean to respond to evil with good in practical terms, especially when facing criticism, slander, or unfair treatment?

How are you currently setting apart Christ in your heart? What helps you stay spiritually strong?