

sermons  
New Testament  
Mark  
16:1-20

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Theme: Easter's Claim upon your life.

Date written: March 22, 1951

Proposition: Observance of Easter and acceptance of its message necessitates a Christian way of life.

Text: Mark 16:20 -- "And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it."

Places and dates preached:

March 25, 1951, Gaustons & Lemmings, Guy

March 29, 1953, <sup>club</sup> of Ruckert, Ala.

Clowade, Delmar, Ala., April 18, 1953

Grace, Myrtle, Miss., April 1, 1955

Stanley, Miss., 7-30-51, April 2, 1961

ments in interracial relations.

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Introduction:

1. Plans had been made by some of the Sunday School workers of the church to paint some of the rooms in the new church, and they had decided to work on Friday, noth thinking that it was Good Fridayx on which they planned to work. When the fact that it was a special day was called to their attention, they decided to work anyway, if the group could be gotten together. Some persons, hearing of this decision commented to the effect that it wasn't right to workx in the church on Good Friday, but when questioned closely admitted that there was work which would be done around home that day. These same people who commented on work in the church on Good Friday don't scruple to do work on Sunday, to participate in activities on Christmas or Thanksgiving or Ascension Day which are not specifically Christian, often to give social and lodge functions priority over church and religious activities. This is not to single out any one person or group, for isn't a similar attitude that which many of us hold?

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2. Easter Day, and the events in Christ's life immediately leading up to Easter, surely are among the most important of events and observances in Christianity. If there is any season of the year which deserves marked attention by believers in Jesus, surely it is the one which includes the observance of the original Lord's Supper, Good Friday, and Easter Day, ~~with~~ Easter crowning them all in importance. To observe this season with special observances is fitting.

3. It is ~~equally important, rather most important,~~ to realize that Easter places a claim upon your life; that honest, sincere, meaningful observance of Easter and acceptance of its message necessitates a Christian way of life, constantly and every day. This is the truth we will study.

I. The facts about Easter was the topic of a previous year's Easter sermon. These facts have a bearing on the topic of Easter's claim upon your life, and need summarizing here.

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1. The resurrection actually took place, as shown by the conviction of the disciples and their power to convince others.

2. The Easter faith is intimately concerned with daily human life.

a. It has given people an assurance of eternal life which has enabled them to stand by their convictions regardless of danger. From such people have come those who have had the most lasting influence on history.

b. The Easter faith gives assurance of ultimate triumph over hardship and affliction.

c. The Easter faith gives assurance of immortality, this overcoming the fear of death, and this assuring one of meeting loved ones and friends who have gone through death in the Easter faith.

3. The first of these two main facts, that Christ actually arose, is the heart and substance of Easter. <sup>This</sup> is what we mean when we use the term "the Easter faith."

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4. The second of these two main facts, that the Easter faith is intimately concerned with daily human life, is the thing we're trying to emphasize now. ~~Under the statement of this fact we have given the reasons to back it up.~~ Today we will try to be more factual, ~~and more~~ more specific, in relating the Easter faith to everyday living.

## II. Living the Christian life.

1. Our text follows the passage in Mark which tells how the disciples became convinced that the resurrection actually took place. This text gives in a brief summary, in a few words, the life of the disciples from that point onward. The first few words of the text are: "and they went forth and preached everywhere."

2. Following the national convention of the American Legion last summer (1950) Earl Cocks, Jr., the newly-elected national commander of the Legion, visited ~~Evans~~ <sup>my town</sup> and many other communities large and small

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throughout the nation. On a visit he inevitably was expected to make a speech, and almost invariably the newspaper account of a speech by him revealed the he spoke chiefly on one subject, the need for a militarily strong America. However, Commander Coker's views along these lines were not just his personal ones, but the official ones of the Legion, and the private ones of a large part of the Legion's individual members. The commander's message wasn't particularly new where he spoke, because individual legionnaires in those places had been expounding the same views at every good opportunity, almost daily.

3. Such is the nature of real Christian faith, of true Christian living. The example of the Supreme Commander, Jesus, in His life, teaching, resurrection, is important. The observance and remembrance of special days in His life, like Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, has value. Nevertheless, by far the most important thing is the daily life and witness of each individual believer, every

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day through the years, each in his own circumstances and locality, each in his own manner. When our text says "they went forth and preached everywhere," it doesn't mean that each one preached everywhere, but with each doing so in his own circumstances and place the message did reach everywhere. Such is your task and mine.

4. Now, let's mention a few specific ways in which each of us, you and I, can live daily Christian lives, or "preach" Christianity where we are. As we do this, it would be well for each of us honestly, very honestly, to examine self and <sup>to</sup> answer silently, in the hearing of God, each question

a. At home is the best place to begin daily Christian life. Are the jokes, the stories, the entertainment, such that we honestly think they are wholesome, acceptable in any company, pure in the eyes of God? Do we strive to overlook the annoyances, the hard work, the disappointment, and try to be cooperative, pleasant, helpful to the others, <sup>at home</sup> even as to most outsiders?

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Do we engage in conduct, of eating, drinking other physical habits, which is at the worst not harmful and at the best actually good for the body? Do we give God some attention regularly, through table blessings, family devotionals, Bible reading, regular personal prayer, preparation for participating in church and other community religious events? If we can answer "yes" to all of these, then we are truly living Christianity at home daily. For each "no" we have to answer, that much are we missing the goal of real Christianity, of truly witnessing to the Easter faith.

b. to our jobs many of the same question might apply <sup>as</sup> for our homes, but with some additional <sup>on the job</sup>. Are we honest to <sup>customer</sup> ~~government~~ employer or <sup>superior</sup> ~~employee~~, truthful, giving honest value, whether it's labor or merchandise or <sup>or their</sup> protection ~~of~~ service, ~~on the job?~~ Is our language, conduct, attitude Christian; do we really practice the Golden Rule? Again, where the answer is an honest "no," we are in need of a more sincere

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effort at practice of the Easter faith. Where we say "yes," we owe God thanks for allowing us to come closer to Him.

c. What about our witnessing for Him in our leisure, recreational, organization, life? Most of the same questions apply that we have mentioned for home and the job, with a bit additional. Do we actually refresh our minds and bodies in our recreation so that we are better fitted for pleasant home life and so can do a better job? Or is our recreation of ~~at~~ a type we are ashamed to have the neighbors know, which leaves a headache or perhaps a hangover, which imparts an inward sense of dirt and cheapness? If it is the first type, it's Christian; if the latter, then you don't really have recreation, and you don't understand the true meaning of the Easter faith.

5. Such are the areas in which daily witnessing to Christ should apply, home, job and recreation. These areas cover all of life.

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No person is perfect. If you have answered all these questions "yes" and feel pretty good about it, you are probably a liar. If you have had to answer "no" to many, you are surely a truthful person. If the answer to much of this questioning is "no, but with God's help I'm going to do my best to improve, and through faith in Jesus I'm going to do better," then you know what the Easter faith means.

### III. Working with the Lord.

1. An elderly man, a school teacher by profession, was advised by his doctor to go to a high altitude, ~~with~~ relatively dry climate. He chose Wyoming, and got a teaching job in the state. He had always been active in his church. Finding quite a few families in the area where he went, and no church to serve them, he organized a Sunday School, then another. He had a local preacher's license in the Methodist Church, a license which anyone may obtain by studying and satisfactory reporting on the Bible and 4 particular other

It says, "the church is the only hope for the future of our race in interracial relations."

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books, <sup>founder</sup> he is recommended by his local church, and which gives one the right to preach. He began holding Sunday worship, or church services, doing the preaching himself; yet ~~asking the church authorities to send a regularly ordained minister.~~ As a result of his work in this way there is now a new Methodist charge in Wyoming which ~~is soon to have a pastor of its own, and will soon erect buildings, and~~ <sup>which</sup> is steadily expanding. This teacher, responsible for all this, did little preaching in his original state, Florida, but attended church regularly and took part in the church's activities. When the need was shown him in Wyoming, however, he met the challenge and did much good. Do you think he could have founded the new congregations if his personal living in his job and in his leisure had not been of a Christian type. Certainly not! Do you think he could have brought the benefits of a church to a new community if he himself had not first been familiar with and convinced of the value of the worship of God in church? Surely not.

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2. Our text tells us concerning the post-Easter life and work of the disciples that "the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it." From many New Testament references we know that these disciples sought the Lord frequent in public worship, and in private prayer and devotions. We know, too, that Jesus, who is the Lord of Easter and of the Easter faith, regularly attended public worship. "And on the Sabbath He went into the synagogue as was His custom." We know that Jesus also worshipped in private, and prayed much. On the night that he was seized and condemned, he was taken prisoner in Gethsemane, a garden where He had gone to pray.

3. So from Jesus, from His immediate disciples, <sup>and</sup> from observation of present life, we know that both public worship and private worship are aspects of the Christian life, <sup>and</sup> the best way of realizing that the Lord is with us. Without regular worship, both at church and privately according to individual possibilities, we cannot be true to the Easter Faith.

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Conclusion:

1. Observance of Easter is important, even as we are doing today.

2. But it quickly loses its importance and becomes a farce unless its message inspires us to everyday Christian living. Christianity, immortality by the grace and in the pattern of Jesus, is not a one-day-a-year, or a few-days-a-year, matter. It is an everyday, serious, most worthwhile matter.

3. Observance of Easter and acceptance of its message necessitates a Christian way of life, daily and constantly. *To live daily as a Christian, that is Easter's claim on your life.*

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