

**A Divine Invitation**  
*Invited to Live*

**Introduction:** This morning I want to view the resurrection through the eyes of Peter

- We read the resurrection story from Luke’s Gospel (recorded in all four)
- Jesus had died on Friday at about 3:00 p.m.
- The Roman centurion—*Truly this was the Son of God*
- Crowd that had watched the crucifixion went home
- Women stayed near the cross and watched
- Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body to be buried in his tomb
- Took Him down and buried Him (women followed)
- Sabbath began at sundown on Friday night so women hurried home
- Prepared spices but could not come to the grave on Saturday—it was the Sabbath
- Early Sunday the women to the grave to take spices—the tomb was empty
- Two men stood there (angels) clothed in dazzling robes
- *“Why do you seek the living among the dead...He is not here but He is risen.”*
- Told the Apostles and Peter ran to the tomb, looked in and saw it was empty and was left in wonder
- Christ had risen as He promised

Let me discuss four important things:

**I. Peter—A man worth knowing**

- A. He was a Jew, his father’s name was Jonas (Peter was married)
- B. He was from the village of Bethsaida in the province of Galilee
  - 1. Northeastern shore of Sea of Galilee
  - 2. Likely where the feeding of the 5,000 took place
- C. His name (Simon-Greek and Cephas-Hebrew both mean “rock.”) Peter (Petros=stone)
- D. One of the first disciples called (brother, Andrew)
- E. Part of the inner circle of Jesus’s disciples (often considered the leader)
- F. Very outspoken—often got him in trouble
  - 1. Thou art the Christ
  - 2. Not so Lord—three tabernacles (Listen to Him)
  - 3. I won’t deny you—3x before the rooster crowed
  - 4. Garden cut off the servant’s ear

5. Denied him three times and went out to weep bitterly
6. He is at the resurrection of Jesus

### Peter is a Man Worth Knowing

## II. The Bible—A book worth trusting

- A. How do we even know that what is in the Bible is true?
- B. It is just written by men isn't it?
- C. How can we be sure it is truth to stake our life on?

### Four Truths

1. Manuscripts-if we don't have original Bible, how can we know it is accurate?
  - a. 6,000 New Testament manuscripts (handwritten copies of the original that have survived)
  - b. They come from regions in Africa, Europe, and Asia
  - c. Additional 19,000 copies in Syriac, Coptic, Latin, and Aramaic making 25,000 in all
  - d. When compared (handwritten remember) accuracy is 99.5% and nothing that effects theology
  - e. Earliest copies of Bible manuscripts are within 100 years of their writing and a portion of John's Gospel that is 29 years after written
  - f. Plato-7 manuscripts and earliest 750 years after written (accuracy 82%)
  - g. Aristotle-49 manuscripts and earliest 1400 years after written (89% accuracy)
  - h. Homer's Iliad-643 manuscripts and 500 years after written (95% accuracy)
2. Archeology continually proves the accuracy of the Scriptures and not ONE single discovery has disproved any biblical fact
3. Faithful preservation of early writings
  - a. Dead Sea Scrolls in 1940's allowed comparison of Old Testament writings
  - b. Book of Isaiah that was 1000 years removed from previous earliest manuscripts was almost identical with exception of some names and cities that were spelled differently—Scribes considered the writing a sacred task
4. The New Testament books were written within 40-60 years after Christ (very early for ancient writing) and there would have been eyewitnesses to discredit the stories if not true

**NOTE:** There is no single 1<sup>st</sup> century document that seeks to discredit the story of the Bible!

### The Bible is a Book Worth Trusting

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### III. The resurrection—a miracle worth believing

#### 14 Proofs of the Resurrection

- A. However, the resurrection from the dead is such a far-fetched suggestion. Isn't it?
- B. How can I know that this claim is trustworthy?

##### 1. Old Testament predicted it

*"No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice. My body rests in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave. You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever." Psalms 16:9-11 NLT*

##### 2. Jesus predicted it

*"From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead." Matthew 16:21 NLT*

##### 3. He proved it and was seen by many after the resurrection

*"During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God." Acts of the Apostles 1:3 NLT*

*"He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles." 1 Corinthians 15:4-7 NLT*

- 4. While the Romans attacked the philosophy of Christianity, not a single incident is recorded of the Romans trying to debunk the resurrection of Christ—they were eyewitnesses.
- 5. Josephus, a Jewish historian of the 1<sup>st</sup> century corroborated the miracles, prophecies, and crucifixion of Jesus and Tacitus his contemporary said, "A most mischievous superstition broke out in both Judea and Rome."

6. The Jews claimed the body was stolen (Scripture indicates) and the Toledoth Jesu (compilation of Jewish writings quotes that theory)-they admitted the tomb was empty.
7. Scholars said the story of Joseph of Arimathea giving his grave is one of most substantiated stories of ancient history because he was a Jew and a prominent one and there would be no way a false story would be tolerated by the Jews.
8. His tomb was never set up as a shrine (50 shrines of famous religious figures at that time) because there was no body, no bones.
9. Women made the discovery—testimony of women in that day was considered worthless and women were property. If it was a legend or fabricated it would have been men discovering.
10. The story has the men hiding while the women wait at the cross and follow the soldiers to the grave and show up on Sunday morning
11. The eyewitnesses (just the 10 disciples)
  - a. Either lying (martyred for it)—people will die for what they know or believe to be the truth but they would know whether it was true or not so why would they lie knowing it meant martyrdom?
  - b. Hallucinating (all of them)
  - c. Or telling the truth
12. The explosive growth of the Christian faith based on His resurrection
13. Early church changed their practices and beliefs
  - a. Worshiped on Sunday (1<sup>st</sup> day of week)
  - b. Communion remembering his death until He comes
  - c. Baptism a symbol of death, burial, and resurrection
14. Jesus is the only religious leader to have ever raised from the dead—the rest are still in their graves

The Resurrection—It's a Miracle worth believing

#### IV. Following Christ—an invitation worth accepting

##### A. Peter was an eyewitness of the resurrection—it changed his life completely

1. Had denied Jesus 3 times and it destroyed him—he had promised not to but still he failed (how often have we promised God we would never fail again?)
2. But even after His resurrection he struggled with the guilt of what he had done
  - a. John 21—he went fishing (indicates he thought his usefulness was long gone)
  - b. Fished all night caught nothing —Jesus standing on the shore of Galilee at dawn—“Did you catch anything?”
  - c. “Throw net on the right side and you will!” 153 fish
  - d. Peter said, “It’s the Lord”-jumped out and ran to the shore
  - e. They all came in and found there were fish on the menu for breakfast—*“Come and have some breakfast!”*
  - f. After breakfast—Peter do you love me? Feed my lambs! 3X (3 denials)
  - g. Similar to the words—follow me
3. Peter followed and God used him in an amazing way
  - a. Day of Pentecost
  - b. Took the Gospel to the Gentiles

##### B. Peter’s writing carries with it the heart of the change that took place in his life

###### 1. What he had seen had lasting effects

*“For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.” We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:16-19 NLT*

###### 2. Nothing more profoundly impacted him than the resurrection

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” I Peter 1:3 NKJV*

C. Christ's resurrection for Peter, gave him a new hope—a hope that was alive.

1. A hope that his past failures did not disqualify him
2. A hope that a new season of fruitfulness was possible and his best days were still ahead of him
3. A hope that no matter what this life brought, eternal life was assured for him one day

*Frederick Buechner wrote:*

*According to Paul, the first person Jesus came back to see after Easter morning was Peter. What he said and what Peter said nobody will ever know, and maybe that's just as well. Their last conversation on this earth, however, is reported in the Gospel of John.*

*It was on the beach, at daybreak. Some of the other disciples were there and Jesus cooked them breakfast. When it was over, he said to Peter (only again he called him Simon, son of John, because if ever he meant business, this was it), "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" and Peter said he did. Then Jesus asked the same question a second time and then once again, and each time Peter said he loved him—three times in all, to make up for the other three times.*

*Then Jesus said, "Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep," and you get the feeling that this time Peter didn't miss the point (John 21:9-19). From fisher of fish to fisher of people to keeper of the keys to shepherd. It was the Rock's final promotion, and from that day forward he never let the head office down again.*

(ILL) Tradition tells us that when Peter died as a martyr. When he was given the choice of how he should die, he said, "I'd like to be crucified up-side-down because I am unworthy to die as my Lord died."

The Scriptures do not record this request of Peter. However, John 21:16, 19 alludes to the fact that Peter would die a martyr's death:

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." John 21:18-19 NKJV*

And... Follow Him He did!

Following Christ was an Invitation worth accepting!

**Conclusion:** And it will be for you as well

The Resurrection of Jesus—because He lives—assures you

1. Your past failures have not disqualified you
2. Your best days are still ahead
3. Eternal life can be assured
4. If you accept His invitation to LIVE