* We know what to say at Christmas…but what’s the greeting for Easter?
* “Jesus Christ is Risen!”
* You say- “He is Risen Indeed!”
* Today, I want you know why Christ died and rose- and what Jesus intends you to do about that.
* And then, I’m going to give you the opportunity today to do something about the Resurrection of Jesus. Maybe the most important thing you have ever done.
* A phone number is going up on the screen right now, will you get out your phones and open up your text messages.
* **Start a new message to this number.- 615-601-2489**
* And just type as the message “City Church”
* We ABSOLUTELY will not spam you. In fact, we won’t even respond to any of these initial texts that say “City Church”
* But I just want this in your phone for later use.
* But before we get there- I want to go to the very first formal sermon ever preached after the resurrection of Jesus. Its in the second chapter of the book of Acts.
* Let me catch you up to what happened between Jesus’ resurrection and this speech.
* Its been about 2 months since Jesus died and resurrected, and in that time he has physically appeared to his disciples multiple times.
* But at the beginning of the book of Acts- he is now gone and he’s given his disciples instructions for starting his church and ​promised​ that he would ​send his Spirit​ to help them accomplish that.
* In Acts 2, ​that Spirit comes in really dramatic fashion​-- all of a sudden there was a sound of a ​fierce, rushing​ wind. And there were little flames over their heads
* Then, they ​all start speaking fluently​ in languages they’d never even heard. In such a way that all these people who have gathered from all over the known world in Jerusalem, and everyone in the ​crowd recognized their language, so naturally​ they wonder ​**what is happening?**
* **So the Apostle Peter stands up in front of this crowd**​—some of which are people​ who had demanded that Jesus be crucified just a couple of months ago--and ​he tells them they had been wrong​ about Jesus.
* **Acts 2:22-24; 32-33, 36-41**
* **22 “Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know. 23 Though he was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him. 24 God raised him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by death.**
* **32 “God has raised this Jesus; we are all witnesses of this. 33 Therefore, since he has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out what you both see and hear.**
* **36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”**
* **37 When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”**
* **38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation! ” 41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.**
* **Transition:** So Peter takes this crowd of people from “You killed Jesus” to “3000 of them being baptized” as new Christians.
* 3000 people who made a decision to believe that Jesus’ resurrection was real and that they would follow him with the first step of Baptism.
* 3000 people who did not wake up that morning expecting to change their mind about Jesus- and yet- they did.
* And this pattern keeps going in the early church.
* In Acts 8, an Ethiopian government official was reading the prophet Isaiah, and the Spirit of God sent this guy named Philip to explain to him that Isaiah was writing about Jesus- and his death and resurrection.
* The eunuch changes his mind about Jesus and then
* **Acts 8:36-38**
* **36 As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s water. What would keep me from being baptized? ” 38 So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.**
* **Acts 9**- You have the case of Saul. A man who ​was taking Christians to jail and consenting to their murder.
* **Acts 9:18**
* But he unexpectedly meets the resurrected Jesus. He goes blind and Jesus tells him that he is going to change him. He sends him to the house of one of his disciples…
* …and in response to him finally seeing who Jesus really is- he is baptized.
* No theology class. No wait & see to prove if he is really serious.
* **Acts 16:14b-15a (start at “The Lord opened” end at “baptized)**
* **In Acts 16,** ​we are told the story of an influential business woman
* **named Lydia**​--she was an ​up-and-coming entrepreneur who attended one of Paul’s small group Bible studies.​
* She decides to follow Jesus and is baptized. Then after her family hears about Jesus’ resurrection- they are baptized.
* **Acts 18:8**
* **Acts 18, a man named Crispus,**​ a leader in the Jewish
* community in Corinth, a man who everybody thought already ​had it all together who didn’t really need any further theological revelations, ​encounters Jesus through Paul’s preaching​ and realizes that his religious upbringing is not good enough and he needs Jesus.
* He believes in Jesus’ resurrection, then he tells *his* whole family, and a whole bunch of Corinthian people- and they are all baptized.
* **Title Slide- “Cut to the Heart: What to Do When You Realize You’re Wrong About Jesus”- Acts 2:22-41**
* **Are you noticing a pattern?**
* In the book of Acts, which is the story of how Jesus’ church came into being- I can’t find a single baptism that was not immediately following someone believing in Jesus’ resurrection.
* The most tangible and immediate thing done after hearing the good news about Jesus’ resurrection- is baptism. Going down under the water and back up- as a symbolic act of Jesus’ death and burial- and his rising from the tomb.
* That’s why on this Easter Sunday, while we are celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus, I’m asking you today to consider changing your mind about Jesus and following it up with baptism. Whatever your situation in life is. Whatever your age, race, sexuality, political affiliation, socio-economic status. Whatever kind of home you grew up in, whatever church tradition you are or aren’t familiar with- I’m not asking your opinions about any of those things today- Jesus saves people from all over that spectrum. The question I want you to answer today is WHAT ABOUT JESUS? Did he resurrect and if he did how should you respond to it?
* So lets go back to that passage we read in Acts 2- that very first post-resurrection sermon.
* At the end of Peter’s sermon, it says that the people were “Cut to the Heart”.
* That just means they were offended in some way, *but also* convinced they needed this truth- and they responded in such a way that all their excuses of not following Jesus fell away.
* So let me show you today why these folks were “Cut to the Heart”- and why you might be too when you hear about Jesus’ death and resurrection.
* **1) You’re cut to the heart when you realize you’ve been wrong about Jesus.**
  + There were lots of theories about Jesus at this time.
  + Some people wanted Jesus to be a **religious prophet**, sort of straightening out the world with religion. Calling people to a deeper commitment to Jewish law.
  + Other people really wanted Jesus to be a **political Messiah**- helping Israel throw off the oppression of the corrupt Roman Empire.
  + Its not unlike the sides of arguments we often find in America today.
  + Some folks think Jesus is here to straighten you out. To make you more moral. More religious. More churchy.
  + **Or** others thing Jesus is here to be subversive. To overthrow the power structures. His death at the hands of an empire are to inspire us to not let the political power structures oppress us. He’s here to help us hold onto or regain the political power we think we have to have.
  + But Jesus would not submit himself to being either of those things.
  + He kept blowing up their categories.
  + He forgave people’s sins. Which really bothered the religious leaders.
  + He allowed people to worship him- and rebuked people who tried to stop them.
  + He claimed that the physical temple they worshipped in Jerusalem would fall- and that he- himself would be the replacement for it. The real way people would worship God.
  + He called for Lordship over his followers. Saying that he needed to be more important to his followers than their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives or children.
  + People said “You are think you’re God!” and Jesus replied, “You said so, not me!”
  + People who were close to Jesus would ask him to calm down with all the God & Lord stuff- it was weird and attracting too much attention.
  + But Jesus wouldn’t quiet down. And so the unlikely combination of the Jewish Religious leaders and the Roman Empire conspired together to crucify him.
  + Even the 12 guys who said they loved him- who promised they would never desert him- they all abandoned Jesus.
  + So everybody had their opinions about Christ.
  + He’s here for religion.
  + He’s here for politics.
  + And all those opinions- seemed to be put to rest at his death. Once he was dead- I guess it didn’t matter anymore.
  + **Acts 2:36**
  + But Peter says in this Sermon- that his resurrection changed that.
  + Peter says, that because Jesus resurrected it proves he is Lord.
  + He is God. He’s not just a religious prophet.
  + And he is Messiah. Not just a political Messiah. He is the one who fulfilled all the prophecies about the one who would come and rescue people from the guilt of their sin…not their political enemies.
  + Peter’s point is that whatever your opinion about Jesus was- it has just been overruled by the resurrection. So now you have to change what you thought about him. You have to reconsider Jesus.
  + Certainly, this has to sound a little familiar to you.
  + Today, we have things we want Jesus to be.
  + A teacher of good morals.
  + A model of social justice.
  + One of many ways to know God.
  + A way to avoid eternal damnation.
    - A sin manager- that allows you to “go to heaven” but doesn’t really change any other part of your life
  + A good luck charm. Someone to pray to when you need a favor.
  + A relationship that helps you get what you want- find success if you will do what he asks.
  + But Jesus’ resurrection won’t allow you to take him in any of those ways. He will not be relegated to any of those misunderstood or watered-down versions of why his blood spilt.
  + Peter is saying- You have to choose. Is Jesus who **HE SAYS HE IS**- or is he **WHO YOU SAY HE IS**?
  + The evidence for the Resurrection is overwhelming in so many ways.
  + Not the least of which is that all these disciples, like Peter, who would have been on the inside of a scheme to make it appear that Jesus rose from the dead, they all went to their deaths, refusing to recant.
  + Why in the world would someone die for something they KNEW to be a lie? There was no financial gain for them. There was no motive to do what they did, say what they said, and live the lives they did and die the painful lives they died EXCEPT for the reason they explained. That JESUS actually resurrected.
  + And that means we all have to reckon with what Peter said.
  + Either you have submitted to Jesus as Lord and Messiah- or you are rejecting him with your own redefinition of him.
  + See, the claim that he is Lord means that he demands our surrender.
  + There is no such thing as partial surrender. Just like there is no such thing as partial faithfulness. If I cheat once on my wife- I have been unfaithful. Not MOSTLY FAITHFUL.
  + If I tell a lie I have been untruthful- not MOSTLY truthful.
  + Either Jesus gets the final say on every part of my life- every decision I make- or I’m not surrendered to him as Lord.
  + Additionally, His resurrection means he’s messiah.
  + That means he is my only hope of salvation.
  + Its not I need Jesus plus sex.
  + Or Jesus plus marriage.
  + Or Jesus plus money.
  + Or Jesus plus morality.
  + Or Jesus plus influence.
  + Or Jesus plus power.
  + Or Jesus plus comfort.
  + Or Jesus plus a great house, 2.5 kids, and 2 vacations a year.
  + No. Just knowing and being with Jesus is enough to save me from everything that has broken me.
  + Just having Jesus is enough to bring me joy.
* **Back to 1)**
* Do you see how this cuts to the heart?
* Do you hear how offensive this is?
* Your life is not your own- you don’t get to choose your comfort and salvation.
* It is only and all Jesus.

So who do you say he is?

Better yet- what does your LIFE say that he is?

* + What you actually believe is more demonstrated by the life you live than the words you speak.
* Does your life agree with the verdict of the resurrection- that Jesus is Lord and Messiah?
* **Transition:** There’s another reason that people were cut to the heart when they heard Peter’s sermon-
* **2) You’re cut to the heart when you know you’re responsible for Jesus’ death.**
  + Twice in this sermon- Peter looks at the crowd and says “You crucified Jesus”
  + When Peter did this- he wasn’t just speaking to this crowd.
  + He was speaking to all humanity.
  + Because not everyone there was directly involved in killing Jesus or even in calling for his death.
  + Later in the Sermon- Peter says that the promised salvation that Jesus brings is for people who aren’t even there…and for children who haven’t even been born yet. (v 39)
  + The other thing we know is that Peter isn’t being self-righteous. He’s not a preacher saying “I knew all along- and I told you so!”
  + No, Peter has his own story of being cut to the heart.
  + The night that Jesus was crucified, Peter refused to be identified with Jesus. When 3 different people said, “Hey, I think you were one of his followers,” Peter vehemently denied it.
  + The crazy thing is- Jesus told him it was going to happen. But Peter didn’t believe him. Peter was more confident in his own strength- than in what Jesus said about him.
  + **Luke 22:61-62**
  + In Luke’s gospel- we are told that on the 3rd denial- he heard a rooster crow and Peter looked across at a bloodied and beaten Jesus- and they made eye contact.
  + In that moment, Peter realized that Jesus was right about him. He was lying denier. That Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself.
  + Peter knew in that moment that he was guilty of killing Jesus.
* **Back to 2)**
  + That is being cut to the heart.
  + When you realize that it was your sin, your failure to stay true and loyal to the God that created you to know him and have a relationship with him.
  + When you see the bloodied and dying Jesus hanging on a cross because of YOUR SIN- you’re cut to the heart.
  + Sin has always been about me redefining good and evil to suit myself instead of submitting to the way God created me.
  + Remember how Peter said that Jesus’ resurrection proves that he is **Lord and Messiah**.
  + The Lord part we covered. It proves he knows what is best for us.
  + But the Messiah part- is that he is the fulfillment of the OT prophecies about our salvation from sin that alienates us from God.
  + **Isaiah 53:5**
  + **5 But he was pierced because of our rebellion,**
  + **crushed because of our iniquities;**
  + **punishment for our peace was on him,**
  + **and we are healed by his wounds.**
  + That’s a prophecy about Jesus hundreds of years before he died on a cross.
  + He was pierced for MY transgressions.

**Back to 2)**

* + This betrayal- like Peter’s- was personal.
  + Its relational.
  + Its eye-to-eye. The God that knows and loves you deeply- also has seen you at your worst.
  + But when you finally realize that your sin is not mainly against other people- but against God….
  + When your sin becomes a big deal to you because of the relational impact it has on a God that loves you- that’s when you’re cut to the heart.
  + Before you’ve been cut to the heart, you say things to yourself like “I know I’m not perfect, but I’m a pretty good person. I’m better than most people.”
  + Or you say things like “I’m sorry I hurt people with my sin, but don’t we all do that. Its really not that big a deal. Its just part of life.”
  + But when you realize your sin is against God…a God that loves you as a Father is supposed to love his kids…. It hits you like Peter…you weep bitterly.
  + It hits you like it hit the Prophet Isaiah when he had a Vision of the LORD in a temple on a throne- he fell to his face and said “I am unclean”.
  + When you’re cut to the heart, **sin becomes less about breaking God’s rules and more about breaking God’s heart.**
  + That’s why sin, in the Bible, is so often referred to as spiritual adultery. Cheating on the God who has committed himself to you.
  + In fact, Marriage itself is given in the Scripture as a picture of Jesus’ relationship to his people. Jesus as the faithful groom, we, his church as his often fickle bride.
  + We are the ones who killed Jesus.
* Have you ever been cut to the heart like this?
  + I’ll never forget the day that my wife was cut to the heart.
  + We were in seminary.
  + I was the college pastor at a mega church.
  + She had recently told me she wanted to end our marriage. She had an affair.
  + We had been married for 10 years at that point. To everyone looking at us from the outside- we were a picture of what people aspired to be.
  + But on the inside, particularly inside my wife, there was a storm raging.
  + She always felt like she couldn’t live up to God’s expectations- his rules. But being married to a pastor in seminary- there was always this external pressure to be a model person.
  + But inside, her thoughts and feelings always seemed to run contrary to what God wanted. She never felt like she could shake her past. And for 12 years, she tried to gut it out. To do the right thing. Until she was exhausted.
  + But she had never been cut to the heart. Her sin was hurtful to other people, and she didn’t want to do that…she didn’t want to hurt me…but it never connected with her that her sin was hurtful to God. And that she mattered to him. As a husband is jealous for his bride because he loves her, so Jesus is jealous for his people, because he loves us.
  + I’ll never forget that early December morning. We had been in counseling for 6 months- and it seemed like we really hadn’t gotten anywhere.
  + She was, yet again, exhausted and found herself just trying to make everybody happy, including herself- but failing miserable at it. She was lodged again in a cycle of shame for not living up to God’s expectations, my expectations, her own expectations.
  + She went upstairs for a shower, and when she came down- she was different.
  + She was talking to me different. Acting different. So much so that I asked her about it.
  + “What happened in the shower?” I asked.
  + To which she replied, “I prayed. I said to God, “Lord, I have sinned against you. And no matter how hard I try to fix it, I can’t. I can’t do anything with my life. So if you want me to be somebody- you are going to have to do it. I quit trying. Its either all you, or its nothing.”
  + And it was as if the Lord said, “Finally, I’ve been waiting for 12 years for you to say that to me.”
  + She was Cut to the Heart, and God met her in that shower.
  + With that simple prayer- she gave up trying to fix herself- and Let Jesus be her Messiah and Lord.
  + Has that ever happened to you?
  + That’s salvation.
  + When you finally realize that its your sin that killed Jesus…
  + But that when Jesus died he was actually dying **for you**.
  + In your place.
  + Because he loves you.
  + And you run to him to receive that forgiveness.
  + Have you ever been cut to the heart?
* **Transition:** Maybe you HAVE been today- so what should you do about it? Peter answers that in his sermon- he says-
* **3) If you’re “cut to the heart”, repent & be baptized because you know you’re forgiven.**
  + In this story- the people literally ask when they are cut to the heart “What should we do?”
  + It's desperate.
  + Its ready to say yes to anything.
  + Its totally submitted to Jesus.
  + Just tell us what we should do!
  + **2:38**
  + Peter says “Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins- and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  + Let me just take this very simply phrase by phrase.
  + First- **Repent.**
  + To repent means to change not just your mind, but your actions.
  + Every time we come across something that makes us rethink our lives, we have one of 2 choices.
  + We have to either change our beliefs to match our current actions, or we have to change our actions to match our beliefs.
  + Often, when we find a way that we want to live, we change our beliefs about God to match.
  + But the Resurrection bulldozes that. Peter said, “Listen to who Jesus says he is, and who he says you are, and turn from that old way and live in his way.”
  + To repent means to line up your life with who Jesus says he is and what he says you should do.
  + **“Be baptized in the name of Jesus.”**
  + The word baptize in the Greek means to immerse.
  + It means to go completely into or under.
  + To be baptized **“in the name of Jesus Christ”** means to immerse every part of who you are as being representative of Jesus. It's a call to Lordship.
  + That commitment is symbolized by the physical act of baptism. Where you get to identify with Jesus by getting in the water, being immersed in it- as a symbol of Jesus’ death, and then being raised out of it- as a symbol of his resurrection.
  + It's a profession of faith you have in Christ.
  + Its like putting on a wedding ring or a sports jersey- You are saying “I’m with Jesus forever. Or I’m on team Jesus”
  + Then Peter says, “**for the forgiveness of sins”.**
  + That “for” is like a because.
  + Its saying you should repent and be baptized Because you know you’re forgiven.
  + You didn’t just kill Jesus. **He willingly died for you**.
  + When Jesus hung on a cross- he was taking your place.
  + He was dying the death you were condemned to die for you sin, so that you could join him in his resurrection.
  + **2:24**
  + Peter said that he was ending the pains of death.
  + Not only was he defeating death for himself in his resurrection, he was opening the door for you to resurrect after you die. So that we can be together with Him and each other when Jesus comes back again to renew the world.
  + So if you know, if you believe, that his death and resurrection is the proof that he loves you and has forgiven you…then repent and be baptized.
  + **2:38**
  + Finally- he says you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  + Can I tell you something right now?
  + Exactly the order of how all this happens- has been argued for millennia by theologians.
  + I’m not here to get into that argument today. But I do want to comfort you with this idea.
  + Likely- right now- if you are hearing a voice, a calling, to believe Jesus- to follow him- to repent and be baptized- its very likely you are already hearing the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has already been given to you as a gift and he is telling you, “Lets go. Obey Jesus. He loves you. Repent and be baptized because your sins have been forgiven”
  + And, BTW, the Holy Spirit will keep doing that. When you have been

a Christian for a month, a year, 10 years, 50 years…the Holy Spirit will continue to press you to repent, and follow and obey Jesus. He’s good like that.

* **Back to 3)**
  + There are 3 groups of people I’m talking to today- and hopefully the Holy Spirit is as well.

**Group 1: Never made a decision to become a follower of Jesus!** ​But today you are cut to the heart and you want to do that.

**Remember the word FOLLOW.**

**Group 2: You are a Christian**​, you’re following Jesus, but today you’ve heard the Holy Spirit call you to be baptized- not to BE SAVED, but BECAUSE you know you’re forgiven and have never displayed that publicly. **Remember the word BAPTIZE**

**Group 3: You got baptized** in some way​ **a long time ago**​, but it **didn’t symbolize**​ a ​surrender to Jesus​ as Lord and a ​commitment to become​ his disciple. In fact, it didn’t have anything to do with you being cut to the heart and trusting Jesus at all. It was something your parents sort of made you do, or maybe you were a baby, not even a conscious act for you. **Remember the word BAPTIZE**

* + Baptism now would not be a rejection of that decision you made long ago or your parents- it would be the ratification of what somebody was hoping and praying for at that time.
  + Here’s what I want you to do.
  + Get out your phones.
  + Remember that number I had you text earlier.
  + Im going to pray in just a minute- and during that prayer, Everybody get your phone out and hold it in your hand.
  + I know-weird. But I want your neighbor be comfortable to do this.
  + Not everybody needs to turn your phone on or mess with it, but will you get it out…and during this prayer, if you are in one of those 3 groups
  + **Would you just Text YOUR NAME along with your word “Follow” or “Baptize” 615-601-2489**
  + Here’s what will happen-
  + This week, likely beginning on Tuesday, one of our pastoral team will reach out to you. We just want to talk you about that decision- or question you might have about it.
  + We want to make a relational connection with you, hear your story, and help you to follow Jesus.