

2 Corinthians 4.1-6

“Open for Business – Wide Open!”

1. Open Grave - Come and See!

EASTER is MOST JOYFUL Day on the Christian Calendar

But let's BE HONEST – the Story STARTS OUT a bit CREEPY...!

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

John 20.1

Apostle John – One of 12 Chosen by Jesus – writes 4th GOSPEL – Eyewitness ...

WOMAN comes in Early MORNING DARKNESS to Graveyard

TOMB where she'd watched JESUS Body placed days before > OPEN GRAVE!

Then JOHN narrates a BUNCH of RUNNING...

Mary RUNS tell PETER & JOHN they both RACE back to OPEN GRAVE

I think I might be RUNNING Too – Far AWAY from CREEPY, Dark, Tombs

1st C BODILY Resurrection of ONE MAN was NOT EXPECTED by ANYONE

GREEKS: Death RELEASED Yearning Spirit from Tomb of BODY > Freedom

No Greek wanted CARCASS of Old Body TIE DOWN his SPIRIT'S Escape

JEWS: Some believed in GENERAL Resurrection on Future Day of ALL People

1 Man rising BODILY from Grave – Never Die Again – Not Expected, Wanted

But LIKE IT OR NOT that is JUST what Happened

GLORIOUS Man STILL Lives – Ruling, Reigning, and will be RETURNING

2000 yrs Passed > MAGNETIC Attraction to Run to Jesus just as STRONG

SOLID Evidence that Keeps Believers & Seekers Coming to FIND JESUS

1. Four Gospels

Mt – Mk – Lk – Jn: Slight variations of Historical Accounts / 1 Unified FOCUS
 Great Man claimed be GOD – Did Great & Marvelous Things – Crucified – Rose
 Authenticity of Testimony > Slightly DIFFERENT Emphasis of EACH Author
 4 Gospels > HEADLINE over 27 book Collection > NT > All testify Resurrec.

2. Empty Tomb

CRITICS – 1. Never Died? – badly Wounded, Revived in Tomb, Walked Out
 Romans were EFFECTIVE CRUCIFIERS > 100 % Success > CROSSES Killed

b. Body Stolen? - Some CLAIM body of Jesus Stolen

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.
 Matthew 27.62-66

IN 2000 yrs – CRITICS of Xtian Faith NOT YET Found Jesus’ BONES

c. Wrong Tomb? TEARY Eyed Women – Confused – Wrong Tomb > Empty

1st C Testimony of WOMEN was NOT Recognized or Respected

God who makes us EQUAL in X – Built Whole Story of Resurrection of His Son
 on Integrity & Accuracy Testimonies of Women

3. Graveclothes

And stooping to look in, he (John) *saw the linen cloths lying there*, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He *saw the linen cloths lying there*, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and *he saw and believed*
 John 20.5-8

Tightly WOVEN Strips of Cloth > Bound w/ 50 kilos of SPICES against Body
 NOT like HEAPS of CLOTHES might be Scattered round your DORM Room

Peter and John – Saw EMPTY COCOON left by RISEN Jesus

RISEN Jesus NOT Struggle to UNTIE Himself > PASSED thru Graveclothes

"A glance at these graveclothes proved the reality, and indicated the nature, of the resurrection."
 John R.W. Stott

4. Eyewitnesses

Gospel tell of Ever-Widening Circle of Eye Witnesses > Women, 12, 120, 500+

If ME I'd walk into Meeting of SANHEDRIN or give SHOCK to Pilate & Herod

But Lesson EMMAUS Road > Best Place to FIND Risen Jesus in SCRIPTURES

5. Transformed Lives

RUNNING toward Jesus Started on EASTER kept Going for Lifetime

Some FASTEST Runners MORE Notable for RUNNING AWAY from Jesus

PETER Afraid to tell Servants before Cross > Fearless Servant after Resurrection

JAMES and JUDE – Brothers of Jesus who Mocked Him and His Big Dreams

Visited by Risen Brother to become LEADERS of Church / Authors of Scripture

PAUL who Killed Followers / WAS KILLED because of Decision to FOLLOW

6. Sunday's - "the Lord's Day"

Over 1000 yrs LOYAL Jews Strictly kept the SABBATH Day for WORSHIP
Decades after Resurr. Jews & Gentiles Remembered Risen Lord on Sundays

7. Church

Believers from All Over-World – ONE GOD, ONE FAITH, ONE LORD

Christians from more than 100 Countries joined with BICF over Years

Walk in with BIBLES containing SAME GOD-INSPIRED 66 Books

Practicing SACRAMENTS of Bapt/LS that both FOCUS on Death/Res of Jesus

CONFESSING Common Faith of APOSTLES and NICENE Creeds

Traveled to more than 40 countries > Churches in Many > Jesus is LOCAL

No other "kingdom" has stood and developed

Millions have "experienced" the Risen Lord

Risen Lord is Creator of all Cultures / Gospel "fits"

Jesus is AS AFRICAN as He is ASIAN, AMERICAN, or European

GOD who made ALL PEOPLE is the ONLY SAVIOR for ALL NATIONS

“The resurrection of Jesus Christ the Gibraltar of Christian evidences, the
Waterloo of infidelity”
Reuben A. Torrey

We Gather on this EASTER to Remember Greatest Event

On the Christian Calendar > RESURRECTION of Jesus from the DEAD

2000 yrs Later: MILLIONS of Christians PILGRIMAGE to JERUSALEM

Remember JESUS who DIED and ROSE Again for their SALVATION

NOT Sure exact Piece of REAL ESTATE Jesus body RENTED for 3 Day Stay

BUT in 2000 yrs of SEARCHING No BODY/BONES been Found

WHY – Billion Men/Women/Boys/Girls gather this Morning: “He is RISEN!”

Resurr. HISTORICAL BASE on which ALL XTIAN DOCTRINES BUILT

Resurrection Evidences	Gospel Claims
Four Gospels	There is a living and true God declaring Himself in Bible
Empty Tomb	Jesus’ claims of being God and Savior are validated
Graveclothes	Believer is made right with God thru Jesus’ Cross-work
Eyewitnesses	Followers who have ‘seen and believed’ must be witnesses
Transformed Lives	Believer’s receive Spirit of God to live for and serve Jesus
Sunday’s	God is sovereign over creation and every calendar day
Church	As we gather in His Name He is with us forever

2. Open Gospel - Can You See?

Our Text in 2 Corinth points to 2nd & 3rd Greatest Events on Christian Calendar

2nd PENTECOST – Holy Spirit sent to Earth by Risen JESUS – Spirit of GOD
INSPIRE the Writing of Scripture // EMPOWER the Advance of the Church

3rd CONVERSION of Saul of Tarsus to PAUL the APOSTLE to the GENTILES
AUTHOR of 13 Letters out of 27 in NEW TESTAMENT

MENTOR of Author who LARGEST BLOCK of the NT – Dr. LUKE

Next to Jesus Christ, Apostle Paul is Single Most Important person in NT

If Paul was not converted on the road to Damascus as he claimed, and if he did not receive the gospel by direct revelation from Christ as he claimed, then Paul was a charlatan, half of the New Testament is a lie, and Christianity has lost its most important teacher after Christ.
J. Gresham Machen

Paul remains GREATEST Theologian & Church Planter of Christian church
NOT Mean work EASY – or that People LIKED and RESPECTED Paul

In 2 Cor seen Misunderstandings btwn Paul Founder / X followers Cori

Letter REVEALS *“The Heart of a Leader – Tears, Truth, Trust”*

a. Open Statement from the Lord

1) Spoken in Message

Message of FIRST IMPORTANCE Paul had for Corinth was Cross/Resurrection

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures 1 Corinthians 15.3,4

PERSONALITY more Important than PURE Word many Churches > Corinth

FALSE Gospel filled with MORE SELF than The SAVIOR

Full APOSTOLIC Authority only Received RENOUNCING Human Authority

v. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

He that would preach Christ alone must of necessity forget himself. John Calvin

Paul NOT CEO or CFO or COO he was SOJ > SLAVE of JESUS

Paul HURT by Troubles/Attacks Corinth > took place as UNDERROWER Ship

Jesus is LORD, Chief Shepherd, Head of Church, Savior of World

Paul NOT LIGHT & TRUTH > Message is VEHICLE of LIGHT & TRUTH

...when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2.1,2

Whether you WORSHIP God Weekly or NEVER Have Before, this is for YOU

It is not a message from a god that nobody knows. It is a message from the creator God, who made all people in his image, the one of whom every human being is at least dimly aware...its appeal, like a message from an almost-forgotten relative, awakening memories and hopes. Tom Wright

2) Seen in Messengers

v. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

COUNTERFEITERS in Corinthian Church > TAMPERED Word of GOD

Like SCALES that were TIPPED or WINE that was DILUTED

God's TRUTH was NOT Popular in CORINTH or even here in CHINA Today

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1.18

SIMPLE Gospel of Christ Crucified/Risen Unacceptable to Many Corinthians

WORD without SPIRIT is a DEADLY LETTER

OLD Covenant GLORY Exceedingly SURPASSED by New Covenant of Christ

For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ. 2 Corinthians 2.17

No problems, troubles, sufferings or perils we face are greater than those that confronted the first disciples. Yet God raised Jesus! That God is our God!...We must learn to put the truth of the resurrection up against, or alongside, every trouble and difficulty we face. Derek Prime

b. Opposition of Satan's Lies

BEHIND all False Messengers / Messages is a FALSE MASTER

Because of Sin/Rebellion – God Temporarily allowed him ‘god of this world’

REASON for Blindness – NOT God's Fault, or Bible's – OUR OWN FAULT

v. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

NEVER turned to JESUS so He can LIFT the VEIL of Blindness

WORD of Life > Saves, Delivers, Heals, and SETS FREE

Gotta BELIEVE it get BLESSING // Not RECEIVE Word, Not REDEEMED

v. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

EARTH that God has MADE is GOOD – indeed it is VERY GOOD

SIN caused SEPARATION – from God, Others, from Environment

Temporary, Terrible HOSTILE Take-Over > Pollutes Spiritual ATMOSPHERE

“Unbelievers serve Satan as if he were their God”

Philip E. Hughes

FOCAL Point of ATTACK > Word of God > Father of LIES – Casts DOUBT

“Bible is Corrupt” / “mere ideas of men” / “fantasy and fairy tales” / “rubbish”

Achilles HEEL of Man MIND > Intellectual PRIDE > Refuses to be HUMBLE

Became Xtian at EASTER Camp – HS Student 1972 – Old Car should Preach Too

Bumper Sticker Window “Jesus Christ is Lord!” > Save Fellow CA’s on Freeway

Standing by my HOLY CAR when Relative Drove in Driveway

Got Out and Saw my DECLARATION > Jesus is Lord > What Heck that MEAN?

But he did not say HECK > Almost 50 yrs later > Much Witnessing/Prayer

He STILL has NO IDEA – SET Free by MERCY – Revelation by GRACE Alone

c. Overpowering, Shining, Light

PAUL's Brilliant MIND fully DEVOTED & CAPTIVATED by GOSPEL
 APOSTLE of NEW Covenant that FAR Exceeds the OLD

...will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?

...the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.

...much more will what is permanent have glory.

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3.8-18

v. 1 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.

THAT Ministry: Carved on STONE, IMPOSSIBLE Demands, Condemnation

THIS Ministry: Written on HEARTS by Spirit, Righteousness, Freedom

God of World has POWER – King of Kings & Lord of Lords OMNIPOTENT
 SHONE Light at CREATION – Shone out of EMPTY Tomb – Into our Hearts

god of World – BLINDS – GOD of Glory shines BLAZING LIGHT we can See
 OUR Job is Make Gospel Known then GET OUT of Way > don't BLOCK Light

v. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

THIS LIGHT ENCOUNTERED Saul of TARSUS on Road to Damascus
 BLINDED by LIGHT > GLORY of God in FACE of JESUS CHRIST

Paul tells his STORY 3 X's in Book of ACTS...

As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light... 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.' Acts 22.6-15

Paul FOREVER Shaped by Meeting Jesus ca. 34 AD – Called as Final Apostle
TRUTHS of Light, Glory, Freedom, Spirit, Son of God > Lit up in his MIND
ONE God – Alpha/Omega – CREATOR & REDEEMER – Beginning & END

LIGHT of FACE of GOD in Christ SHOWN that 1st EASTER MORNING
MARY saw FACE of her LORD – Peter & John – Cleopas & Wife Emmaus Rd

GRAVE is OPEN – GOSPEL is OPEN – Open your MIND and HEART
REPENT of Following god of this world --- THINKING his Foolish Thots
RECEIVE the WORD of Christ – True Open, Sincere, with NO DECEIT
REJOICE that this Jesus DIED for your SINS and ROSE to give you NEW LIFE
NO Better Day to RECEIVE Christ than DAY He Rose Again to SAVE YOU!

John 20.¹Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.⁸Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed

2 Corinthians 4.¹Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ²But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.