



Truth doesn't take polls. Truth doesn't care how one votes. Truth doesn't change—like it or not. In this series we will look at how the never-changing gospel can change the way we deal with reality.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 This year is just the eleventh time since 1700 that Easter Sunday fell on April 1. Many would argue that only fools would believe in the resurrection of the dead. Others would contend that only a fool would ignore the evidence for the bodily resurrection of Jesus. What does it take to convince you something is real? How do people decide if something is true or false? What types of things do you think they consider before deciding?

2 EASTER IS much ado about "nothing." As far as the early disciples were concerned, nobody expected "no body" when they went to the tomb. **Read Mark 16:1-8.** What were they expecting to find when they got to the tomb? How do you think they felt when they saw the empty tomb?

3 No other world religion is grounded in an historical event that welcomes investigation like the Christian faith. No reasonable person denies the historicity of the life, death, and burial of Jesus of Nazareth but many deny his resurrection from the dead. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-14.** What are some of the reasons people deny the resurrection of Jesus? How do you respond when someone challenges the reality of the resurrection?

4 EASTER SAYS... We have nothing to hide. God knows everything we do, and God has always known what He was going to do about it. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.** Why do you think Paul took the time to remind the Corinthians of the gospel

in this chapter focusing on the resurrection? How crucial is the cross and the resurrection to the entire gospel story and how should it impact the way that we live?

5 EASTER SAYS... We have nothing to fear. Fear can only be present where hope is absent. Maybe that's why one of the first things Jesus said after his resurrection was "Do not be afraid." **Read Romans 8:18.** How does the resurrection of Jesus remind us that we have nothing to be afraid of? What specific situation do you need to look on with hope because of the resurrection of Jesus?

6 EASTER SAYS... We have nothing to lose. If we know we will live after we die we can be fully alive before we die. What we do today is important if we know there is a tomorrow. How is the resurrection framing your meaning and purpose in life right now?

7 Rick closed by reminding us that Easter is more than a day; Easter is a way to live every day. We have nothing to hide, nothing to fear, and nothing to lose. **Read Romans 8:34-39.** How does it make you feel knowing that "nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"? What is one thing you can do to make sure that Easter is the way you live every day?





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1 Truth doesn't check the latest polls, doesn't ask what's the latest fad or most popular view, or conform to what's politically correct. Truth is stubborn, like it or not. Followers of Jesus believe that Jesus is the truth, that he is full of grace and truth, and he is the ultimate reality through whom we interpret and respond to all of reality. What are some things that are acceptable in our culture that don't line up with the truth of God's word? Why do you think people so easily embrace a worldview that is contradictory to God's truth?

2 YOU HAVE an expiration date. The Bible reminds us, "Each person is destined to die once..." (**Hebrews 9:27**). Facing this truth should cause us to ask, "What happens after we die?" How do some people in our culture respond to that question? How do those ideas compare to what Christians believe happens to believers after they die?

3 The empty tomb gives us great hope, but it should also cause us to ask another question: "So how should I live before I die?" **Read Psalm 90:12.** What does it mean to number your days? Is that easy or difficult for you to do? Explain.

4 YOU SHOULD... Enjoy each day as a gift from God. Read Psalm 118:24. We can't choose to live as long as we want, but we can choose to live as much as we want while we are alive. What does that look like practically and how has it been working for you lately? What is one step you can

take today to intentionally enjoy each day as a gift from God?

5 YOU SHOULD... Love all you can while you can. Jesus taught that the most important thing to learn from the Bible is this: love God, love people. He also taught that you cannot do one unless you do the other. Why is that true and how has that been a challenge for you recently? **Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.** What are you currently focusing on that doesn't really matter? If you could instantly change one thing about how you are living in this area, what would it be?

6 YOU SHOULD... Invest in the eternal. Read Matthew 6:19-20. Why is heaven a better place to invest than earth? Rick reminded us of two parables in which the main characters ignored this truth (**Luke 12:16-21 and 16:19-31**). What did these men do wrong and what is the key point we can learn from these parables? What is one way you can make an investment in the eternal today?

7 YOU HAVE... a resurrection date. Earlier we noted that "Each person is destined to die once..." We all have an expiration date. That verse concludes with this warning, "...and after that comes judgment" (**Hebrews 9:27**). How would it change the way we live if we kept in mind the fact that we will all be judged? What difference does being "in Christ" have on your resurrection date (now and then)?





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1 The battle to be in charge has been waged from the beginning. Adam and Eve were seduced by the lie that they should take control of their lives, and their infected DNA has been passed on to all of us. We all have “empire desire” and want to build our own kingdoms. How have you noticed this to be true in your own life and how does our culture encourage it? What's the problem with thinking that you are actually in control?

2 I AM A recovering controlaholic. We all have a great motivation to establish order in our lives, and we all experience great frustration when that order is not realized. On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your own experience with being a “controlaholic” and how might that compare with how those closest to you might rate you? What are some unhealthy ways our battle with “control” often manifests itself?

3 CONSIDER THE TRUTH... that life does not recognize your sovereignty. Life refuses to take orders from any of us. **Read James 4:13-15.** What are some of the presumptions we often make about life according to what James says in this passage? What can we do to guard against the sin of presumption (also see **James 4:16-17**)?

4 CONSIDER THE TRUTH... that God does not share His throne. Like it or not you and I were born into someone else's kingdom. **Read Psalm 103:19.** Wisdom acknowledges that control belongs only and always to God. How can giving up the “illusion of control” in your life actually lead

to freedom? Share an example of a time this has been true in your life.

5 SURRENDER THE THRONE... and you will love better. “Controlaholics” live with a constant irritation: people. Other people are constantly frustrating our plans, agendas, and preferences, refusing to align themselves with our will. As long as we seek control other people will always be the problem. How many of you are frustrated right now with someone who will not let you change them? What if we let God have the job of changing them, and our job was to love them? Talk about the difference that paradigm shift would have.

6 SURRENDER THE THRONE... and you will live bolder. Most people believe the goal of life is to die safely. However, with God in control we do not have to be cautious; we can be courageous (See **Acts 28:31**). Controlling outcomes is God's responsibility; pursuing obedience is ours. How can internalizing that truth revolutionize how you live your life?

7 SURRENDER THE THRONE... and you will praise bigger. “Controlaholics” act as if their circumstances are the deciding factor in determining how much worship God is due. But the truth is, we can praise God even in the difficult seasons of life. **Read Psalm 43:5.** What part of your life is out of control right now? What is one way you can praise God today even in the midst of circumstances you can't control or manage? Close your group time by expressing your praise to God in worship and prayer.





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1 The paths our lives take are a consequence of the choices we make. **Read Galatians 6:7.** Last week's message reminded us that *"You Are Not in Control,"* while this week's message focuses on the truth that *"You Get to Choose."* How would you explain this healthy tension in the Bible between divine sovereignty and personal responsibility?

2 GOD CHOSE to give us the gift of choice. We were made to choose. This freedom comes with the risk that it will be misused. How is *"freedom of choice"* an indispensable part of what it means to be made in God's image? What impact does this have on God's desire to enjoy fellowship with us?

3 Rick reminded us that *"the gift of choice grants us great dignity and great responsibility that is often misused."* He went on to ask us this challenging question, *"But is it right to be mad at God for not sparing us from the consequences of our own choices...or even the choices of others?"* Why or why not? How would you explain this to someone else?

4 WE GET TO CHOOSE... who we will worship. This is a choice we must make every day. **Read Joshua 24:15.** How do the choices you make every day reveal and determine who or what has captured your heart? What changes might need to be made in your family in order for you to *"Worship Regularly"* and *"Connect with God"* daily? Follow up discussion: Rick pointed out from **Luke 10:41-42** that sometimes the choice is not between bad and good; it is between good and

better. How have you experienced that to be true in your life?

5 WE GET TO CHOOSE... how we will respond. We live in a world that values retaliation, and justifies returning evil for evil by saying, *"I had no choice."* But Jesus makes it clear that we are not to treat others on the basis of how they treat us. **Read Matthew 5:38-39, 43-48 and Romans 12:17-21.** Have you sought revenge with anyone in your life? If you feel comfortable sharing, what was it that led you to that response? How would Jesus want you to respond differently after hearing the truth of His Word?

6 WE GET TO CHOOSE... what we will become. We are conscious of the choices we make to change us on the outside, but too often we are unconscious of how the daily choices we make are changing us on the inside. How have you seen that to be true in your life? How is *"you will reap what you sow"* both a warning and a promise? Follow up discussion: **Read Philippians 2:12-13.** Although we do not partner with God in our justification, how do we partner with Him in our sanctification?

7 WE CHOOSE... because we have been chosen. The decisions we make are not so God will love us, but because He does. **Read Ephesians 1:4 and Colossians 3:12.** How does it make you feel knowing that God chose you first and how should that impact the way you live? As you reflect on this message, what is one thing you need to focus on this week?





Selfishness doesn't come second hand. Toddlers are living proof of that. As we grow, we find ourselves having to unlearn a dangerous thought: it's about me. Thankfully, God has filled His world and His Word with many reminders and much needed redemption.

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1 We've all had humbling moments, and later we can look back and laugh (or learn). Share a funny or memorable moment when you had to learn that not everything was about you.

2 Read Psalm 19:1 and Psalm 8:1-4. Creation is about God's glory. What are some moments you've had in nature that reminded you life was about something bigger than just you? What is it about nature that humbles us and exalts God?

3 Read Genesis 1:26-27 and Isaiah 43:5-7. Your life is about God's glory. Why does it matter to know God's purposes for us? How does knowing this affect our faith and day to day lives?

4 Read Hebrews 1:1-3. Jesus displays God's glory. In everything Jesus did, He glorified God. And nothing glorified God more than Jesus defeating sin through the cross (**see John 17:1**). Much our faith could be summed up in saying, "It's not about us, it's about Jesus." If someone asked why it's about Jesus, how would you answer?

5 Renewal and rescue is for God's glory. Read Revelation 21:3-6. We give and serve and strive in reflection of what Jesus has done on the cross and in anticipation of what Jesus will do in eternity. How is God glorified in our acts of compassion?





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1 Like it or not, **God is not** all you need. The first man lived in a perfect environment, had an exalted status, and enjoyed unhindered intimacy with God, and this was God's assessment: **"It is not good for the man to be alone."** **Genesis 2:18** What are some of the reasons you think God made this assessment? How has this been true in your life?

2 WE WERE CREATED for community. **Genesis 1:26** reminds us that God is eternally relational, **"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness."** What is significant about the Godhead existing in community? How should that impact your relationship with God and other people?

3 Rick reminded us that **"Jesus' mission was bigger than the salvation of individuals; it was the creation of a new community."** **Read Matthew 1:21-23.** Jesus never invited anyone into solitary discipleship — **followship** demands **fellowship**. With these thoughts in mind, how would you respond to some in our culture who subscribe to the **"I'm spiritual but not religious"** mindset when choosing not to be part of a church community?

4 COMMUNITY... is messy. The reason this is true is because community involves people and people are messy. What are some examples of this from your own experience? Follow up discussion: The temptation is to view messy people the way our culture views every other inconvenience: as disposable. What is one thing you can do to change the way you view "messy" people?

5 Rick went on to remind us that, **"Community will always be missed when it is built on preferences instead of promises; when it is built on "like" instead of love.** Community is based not on compatibility but on commonality: our mutual need for grace." **Read Romans 15:7.** What are some things we can do in our group to make sure we create an environment where everyone is welcome to **"the table"** regardless of the messes they bring?

6 REAL COMMUNITY demands real commitment. One of our culture's greatest lies is that you can have intimacy without commitment. But connection without commitment ends in pain, not community. Biblical love is love for the long haul; love as a lifestyle, not a hobby. **Read 1 Peter 4:8.** What does showing **"deep love for each other"** look like in practical ways? Follow up discussion: God made His commitment to us in many ways including going to the cross. **1 John 4:16** reminds us that **"God is love. If we keep on loving others, we will stay one in our hearts with God, and he will stay one with us."** What are some ways we can **"keep on loving others"** (the focus here being people not already at the table)?

7 TO KEEP COMMITMENTS we need God. Because we need others, we need God's help (there's an enemy trying to prevent table gatherings). Share an example of how you need God's help in loving someone else. **Read Ephesians 5:1-2 & Romans 5:5.** What solutions do these verses offer?

