

# Easter Changes Everything

17 April 2022

## *Easter Day Sermon*

Reading: John 20:1-18

*Loving Jesus*

*at Easter you rose from death and changed the world,  
change us too.*

*In your name we ask it.*

**Amen**

A small change can make a big difference. A man wanted to send an email to his wife but accidentally changed the address. He had left the snow filled streets of New York for a holiday in Florida. His wife was soon to join him. Instead of his wife the email went to an elderly pastor's/vicar's wife who had just lost her husband.



*A stack of love letters on a wooden background. | Photo: Shutterstock*

When the grieving woman received the mistaken email, she let out a scream and fainted. It read, "Dearest Wife. Just checked in. Everything is prepared for your arrival tomorrow. P.S. Sure is hot down here."

That first Easter morning was not a small change but a big change.

In Jerusalem, the Pharisees and scribes and temple priests were sleeping in. Now that the troublemaker Jesus had finally been disposed of they were enjoying their first good night's sleep in months. They didn't realize that Easter changes everything!

At the Governor's Palace, Pilate hadn't slept well. "What was that all about?" he kept wondering. "Why were those people so keen on that strange man's death?" Pilate shook his head and thought about how he might convince the emperor to transfer him to a more desirable posting. Pilate didn't realize that Easter changes everything!

The followers of Jesus were still in Jerusalem, a long way from their homes. But they were afraid to come out of hiding. They feared the authorities, so they were spending a second night huddled together in a borrowed room. They didn't realize that Easter changes everything!

Mary Magdalene went alone to the tomb after the Sabbath lock down to grieve. Through her tears and the darkness of the dawn she saw the stone rolled away. Her grief quickly turning to confusion, "Where have they taken him?" She ran to tell Peter and the other disciple. They came and discovered an empty tomb. It was then Mary's life would be changed forever. It was when Jesus spoke her name, "Mary," that her confusion turned to joy. Mary became the messenger of hope to all the world. "I have seen the Lord!" she announced to the other disciples. She was beginning to realize that Easter changes everything!

Of all the arguments in favour of the resurrection of Jesus, the most compelling to me is the way the Risen Christ can change lives. Not just 2,000 years ago but today.

One such life is Coss. Coss grew up in the Bronx in New York. He began smoking drugs at 11 and by 13 he was dealing. He admired the men on the corners who had jewelry and lots of money. They became his role models. By 26 he had twenty people working for him and was earning over two million dollars a year selling drugs. That was until the police caught up with him. He lost everything and was put in prison for seven years. Overweight, Coss began working out and it wasn't long until other inmates asked him to help them lose weight. Using only his body as a gym Coss lost 30 kilograms and even helped Bus who was, you guessed it, the size of a bus.

With only two months to go and looking forward to a new life outside, one of the guards accused him of hitting him. He was put into solitary confinement with the prospect of a further long sentence. He literally started banging his head against the wall. He had nothing, but the worst of all he had no hope. One of the other inmates gave him some paper and a pencil so he wrote a letter to his sister. "Please, please," he said, "get me a lawyer to get me out of here." He felt better writing the letter but then he realized he had no way of sending the letter. More desperation, more head banging. What to do? Apart from a bucket and a blanket he had nothing.

Then he remembered the little Bible that each inmate was given. Maybe he thought if I just read the Bible something might happen. No sooner had he turned to Psalm 91(1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.") than something did happen that was to change everything. What fell out of the Bible? A stamp. It was then

Coss had what he called a spiritual awakening. He realized there was more to life than just him, there was God. He confessed to God all the harm he had done dealing drugs and misery. He pledged to do something positive with his life.

Today you will find Coss not dealing drugs but the CEO of a growing chain of gyms - *Conbody*. He employs people like him who have left jail and are trying to start over, fifty-six of them, and no one has ever re-offended. He has helped thousands of people renew their bodies and it all began with that moment of grace when he had nothing, only God and a postage stamp.

The heart of the Christian faith is, that the dead and crucified Jesus is now alive.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead changes everything. It changed the lives of the first disciples, it changed the life of Mary Magdalene, it changed the life of Coss. Jesus stands ready to change my life, and yours too, for the better.