

APRIL 2019

RESURRECTION AND BIBLE READING

BY BIJAN MIRTOLOOI

Each year at Easter Christians throughout the world celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is at the very heart of the gospel message. In fact, C. S. Lewis is observed that for the earliest Christians, to preach Christianity meant primarily to preach the resurrection: “The resurrection is the central theme in every Christian sermon reported in the Acts. The resurrection and its consequences were the ‘gospel,’ or good news which Christians brought.”

The resurrection changes everything in history, but I want to focus here on just one of those “consequences,” name-

ly, how should the resurrection of Jesus affect the way people read the Bible?

The answer to that question begins with the risen Jesus himself. In Luke 24, a few days after Jesus rose from the dead, he met some of his disciples in an upper room. There he gave them a brief lesson on what the Bible is all about. He began, “*This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms*” (verse 44). Scholars agree that when Jesus spoke of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, he was using familiar shorthand to describe

the entire Bible (of course, the New Testament was not yet written).

A few moments later Jesus continued: “*This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name*” (verses 46-47). According to the risen Jesus, the entire Bible is about him: his death, his resurrection, and how the news of his death and resurrection will be preached by his people for all time, in all places, to all people.

If we seek to follow the lead of the risen Jesus and read
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THIS EASTER GIVE TO BRING HOPE TO OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Every Easter, in fellowship with the church across the centuries and the world, Redeemer receives an Easter Sacrificial Offering. Each year this goes to support the work of Hope for New York, our partner for loving and serving New Yorkers in need across our city.

We do this as a sign that Easter isn’t just a celebration for us to enjoy, but a power that sends us out to bring resurrection joy to the world. At this time, we remember especially those in our city who are marginalized or experiencing poverty.

100% of what you give on Easter will go to support the

programs of Hope for New York’s 50+ non-profit affiliates, including food and shelter for the homeless, job skills training, youth mentoring, and more.

Will you consider giving generously to support the work of Hope for New York this Easter? You can give
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HOW DO WE REACH A GLOBAL GENERATION?

BY TIM KELLER

When I was in Seoul for the first time last year many people expressed concern that the Korean church was starting to shrink, despite the fact that it had grown faster than the country's population for the last 70 years. Everyone was worried about how to reach younger people. My guess is that this is also true in many other countries around the world, not just Korea.

The West has become highly individualistic — what matters is me, not my family, not my community. Am *I* happy? Are *my* desires being fulfilled? But in the rest of the world, that's not how most people think. The Western narrative says the meaning of life is to be free and to be myself, but for the rest of the world, the meaning of life is to be a good person — a good son or daughter, a good husband or wife, a good member of my community.

But through the global influence of the Internet and other culture-exporting platforms, Western stories and movies are influencing the entire world.

What you're now finding in Korea, for example, is younger people that are a blend of Western and non-Western values.

These young Koreans are still pursuing honor and achievement for their family's sake. But they're not like their parents. Younger people in these cultures still keep those ties, such as deferring to authority in a way that Westerners have long since abandoned. But because of Western media, there's a growing trend towards individualism. It's almost like putting two chemicals together to form a new cultural compound. Nobody quite knows what to do with them. It would almost take somebody from the West and somebody from Korea working together to say, "How do you reach them?"

If we all admit that none of us really have the answers but that we all have some ideas, we could start navigating this challenge together. We have to collaborate. And we have to experiment.

On a related note, we at Redeemer City to City aren't

in the business of exporting Hollywood and Western values. Far from it. When Christians in America have a new idea, they churn out books and videos. If they have an evangelistic method that works in Florida, they think they should give it to everybody. The trouble is, when Americans export their way of doing evangelism to other parts of the world where people are more secular or non-Western, it rarely works well.

On a positive note, our kids are already connected across cultures. Young people are talking to each other all across the world. This is the sort of communication that church leaders need to reach the next generation — a collaboration across cultural, national, and denominational lines. And when we meet together, like the cultures of the world already are, then we can begin to meet the most important challenges of our day.

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REDEEMER REPORT

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The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
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Temple Israel Sanctuary
112 E75th St.
(btw Park & Lexington)
Services: 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.
& 5 p.m.

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(btw Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30 a.m.,
11:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.

West Side Church Plant:
NY Society for Ethical Culture
2 W. 64th St.
(at Central Park West)
Service: 10:30 a.m.

Salvation Army Auditorium
120 W. 14th St.
(btw 6th & 7th Aves.)
Services: 9:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.
DT LAB: Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

HFNY EASTER STORY OF HOPE: JUSTICE REYES

Justice Reyes was 18 years old when he walked through the doors of Brooklyn Teen Challenge — a Hope for New York affiliate that provides a residential faith-based recovery program for men and women with life-controlling issues. Below, he shares his story of how God worked through the program at Brooklyn Teen Challenge to reveal the meaning and purpose God has for his life.

I grew up with my mom and dad in the Bronx. My dad is an immigrant from Honduras. When I was young, we were a pretty normal family. But slowly my parents started to drift apart and then divorced. I moved with my dad to White Plains while my two younger brothers stayed with my mom.

My dad was the type to work a lot, so I grew up with a lot of babysitters and other people watching me. Then, in middle school, I started drinking and using drugs. A neighbor I rode the bus to school with was already drinking. One day he asked me if I wanted a drink or if I wanted to smoke weed.

That started my obsession with the party lifestyle. It got to a point where I was drinking seven days a week, and, for many years, I thought that's what life was about. Really, I was trying to escape my life, but the partying never fulfilled me. I always wanted more.

Then, one day, I got into a car accident. My friend was drinking and driving and we smashed into a pole. I remember my mom coming the next morning to the hospital and telling me, "Justice, you need to get help." I felt so terrible. She was right. That was the breaking point.

My mom had heard about Brooklyn Teen Challenge, a

faith-based addiction recovery program, from someone at her church. She suggested I go, so I went there voluntarily when I was 18 years old. I walked out almost immediately.

But something brought me back very shortly. I felt like I needed to stick it out. And the day I came back, I remember a man asking me if I knew Jesus. I didn't, but during the church service that day, they invited people to come up and accept Christ as their Savior, and I did.

The change wasn't immediate, and the process was difficult. I still had my issues when I first got there. And it wasn't until about seven months later that I really started gaining a relationship with Christ and understanding the Bible more. But when I started developing that relationship with Him, Christ allowed me to confront the real issues in my life with my family and myself. I started to more fully understand that this man, Jesus, is what I'd really been searching for all along. That He was the fulfillment I had been craving.

And He has changed my life. He's shown me that walking with Him means that life will have ups and downs, but I can still trust Christ. He has given my life meaning and purpose far beyond what drinking or partying or using had. God

really used the program at Teen Challenge to reveal those things, and Himself, to me. Teen Challenge built an environment where I was able to grow and flourish and come to truly know Christ. One thing that really shaped my life was memorizing scripture — having God's truth constantly in my mind really helped me. It felt like a real solution.

In 2012, I graduated Teen Challenge and moved to Florida to study pre-law. I was working for a law firm last year when I felt God telling me to contact Teen Challenge to see what positions they had available. They had one position open: development coordinator. So I took it.

I had this desire to go back to the place that God used to help me get to where I am today — following Christ and seeking His will for my life. And today, because of Christ, I know that whether I'm sweeping the floor or speaking to millions of people, there's meaning there. And it's all because of Him.

This Easter, you can support more than 50 organizations across the city — like Brooklyn Teen Challenge — serving New Yorkers in need by giving to Hope for New York at hfny.org/easter.

30 YEARS OF GROWING A GOSPEL MOVEMENT IN NYC

BY CREGAN COOKE

In Redeemer's early years and for many years thereafter, the Holy Spirit did an amazing thing in the hearts of those who were regular attenders. He made the people of Redeemer's community unabashed bringers of their friends. This made Redeemer unique in its makeup and a compelling example how church was relevant and welcoming to anyone.

As the **Redeemer Family of Churches & Ministries** looks ahead to its **30th birthday** this September, it is focusing on reenergizing that same bringer mentality with every person who calls Redeemer their church home. One of the cornerstones of Redeemer's vision is to be a community where people who

are exploring the claims of Christianity feel their questions are heard and addressed, and where it is safe to deliberate on the plausibility of the gospel. In every worship service, group meeting and event, Redeemer's hope and desire is to be a place where people discover the life changing power and beauty of the gospel. We hope and pray that this missional mindset will eventually bring about renewal to every corner of the city.

With the addition of East Harlem in October this fall, the Redeemer church family will be holding 10 worship services across 6 different locations around Manhattan (East Side, West Side, Downtown, Lincoln Square, Downtown LAB and East Harlem). **To realize the**

vision of a city renewed by the gospel it will take every one of us to be committed bringers of our friends. And it takes the time, talents and financial resources of everyone who believes in this vision to steward it forward. So whether you live on East 84th St. in Manhattan, or are a friend in Tupelo, Mississippi, **we invite you to pray** that God would continue to use Redeemer to bring the hope of the gospel to more of NYC and that the Holy Spirit would energize every person who attends a Redeemer worship service to be a bringer of their friends.

If you would like to support Redeemer's vision financially, **you can make a gift at redeemer.com/give.**

RESURRECTION AND BIBLE READING

... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

the Bible in light of what he has accomplished, there are at least three implications that stand out.

First, if the resurrection really happened, that means the Bible is news about what God has done, not advice about what you must do. If there were no resurrection then the Bible would basically be like most other religious texts, giving suggestions to its followers about what they should do if they want to be right with the god or gods of that religion. It is true that the Bible contains guidance for how Christians

are meant to live in the world. But what makes the Bible unique is that it is not primarily giving advice or moral maxims or inspirational fables. Instead, the Bible is first and foremost a record of what God has done, how God has faithfully kept his promises, most ultimately demonstrated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Reading the Bible in light of the resurrection means coming to the Bible first to see Jesus and what he accomplished for you.

A **second** implication of reading the Bible in light of the

resurrection is that we read the Bible rightly when we read it from "back to front." Any lover of good detective stories knows what I mean by this. My family loved watching the detective series, "Monk." At the climactic moment, Monk came forward and proceeded to seamlessly connect the clues that had been given throughout the show, weaving them together into a coherent and airtight narrative. To rightly make sense of the earlier parts of the story, we needed to know what happened at the end.

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REDEEMER'S FAMILY OF CHURCHES SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF EASTER

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE — THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 6:30 PM

Downtown | The Salvation Army, 120 W. 14th St., between 6th and 7th Aves.

Maundy Thursday is a celebration of the events at the Last Supper. There will be a worship service and an optional simple communal meal afterwards. RSVP needed to attend the communal meal as space is limited (meal is optional and costs \$10 per person, pay when you register). There is no need to RSVP to only attend the worship service. Childcare will not be available, and all children are welcome to be in the service.

GOOD FRIDAY CONTEMPLATIVE SERVICE — FRIDAY, APRIL 19, NOON to 1 PM

West Side | W83 Minstry Center, 150 W. 83rd St., between Amsterdam and Columbus Aves.

The sanctuary will be open for a quiet service of prayer and reflection on Good Friday. Guided by the gospel accounts of the cross, we will repent, worship, and marvel at the sacrifice of Jesus.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES — FRIDAY, APRIL 19

**East Side | All Souls Unitarian Church, 1157 Lexington Ave., corner of 80th St.
at 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**

Childcare through age four available at 5:30 p.m. service only. RSVP required.
Please email sabrina.booth@redeemer.com with age of your child(ren).

**West Side | W83 Minstry Center, 150 W. 83rd St., between Amsterdam and Columbus Aves.
at 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.**

Childcare available from nursery through pre-K.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES — SUNDAY, APRIL 1

Every Easter, we receive a special offering for those who are marginalized, vulnerable or experiencing poverty. The Easter Sacrificial Offering goes to support Hope for New York, our partner for mercy and justice. 100% goes to support programs at Hope for New York's 50 non-profit affiliates, including food and shelter for the homeless, job skills training, youth mentoring, and more. Learn more at hfnny.org/easter.

**East Side | Temple Israel Sanctuary, 112 E. 75th St., between Lexington and Park Aves.
at 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

There will be a special Easter program for children at the 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. services.
No children's programs at the 5:00 p.m. service.

**West Side | W83 Minstry Center, 150 W. 83rd St., between Amsterdam & Columbus Aves.
at 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

Childcare available from nursery through pre-K.

**Lincoln Square | New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St. & Central Park West
8:45 a.m.* and 11:00 a.m.**

Childcare available from nursery through pre-K. A time of Q&R will follow both services.

**Downtown | The Salvation Army, 120 W. 14th St., between 6th and 7th Aves.
9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

Childcare available from nursery through pre-K at 9:30 a.m. service. No children's program at 5:00 p.m. service.

*Even with additional Easter Sunday services, we anticipate that most if not all morning services will reach or exceed capacity. If you can, please consider attending the *first* morning service at one of our sites (if applicable) or any of our evening services where we expect to have more space available.



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RESURRECTION AND BIBLE READING ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 4)

The resurrection of Jesus means reading the Bible is a bit like watching a good detective show. Jesus's life, death, and resurrection is the "aha moment" of the entire story of the Bible. Without it, we're left wondering how all the disparate parts of the Bible fit together.

There's **one more** implication to draw out about reading the Bible in light of the resurrection: we read the Bible in relationship with the

living Christ. As we read Scripture and soak ourselves in the truth of the Bible, we do so in union with the risen Christ. Jesus lives, and he lives in his people. That means Bible reading is not a flat, static experience where you merely acquire information, but is, instead, a living encounter with the risen Christ, as Christ guides his people through the power of the Spirit.

Back to Luke 24: The risen

Jesus showed two of his disciples that the whole Bible was about him, and then he vanished from their sight. They exclaimed, "*Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us and opened the Scriptures to us?*" (verse 32). That's what Bible reading in light of the resurrection can produce: hearts burning with hope and wonder as you encounter the living Christ in the pages of Scripture.

THIS EASTER BRING HOPE ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

in-service on Easter Sunday or at hfn.org/easter.

What can your gift do for our neighbors in need?

\$1,000 can provide free legal services for two New Yorkers in need

\$500 can provide year-round mentoring and a supportive community for three teen moms.

\$250 can provide healthy meals and community support for five families.

\$100 can provide medical care for five homeless patients.

Our prayer this Easter is that you will continue to live out the hope and power of the resurrection in our city.