

## **Easter Sunday morning**

On Easter Sunday morning New Hope Presbyterian Church with people throughout the globe will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many people who do not regularly attend Christian worship will come to church Easter Sunday. I cannot imagine a better Sunday to come as consider the glorious and historical reality and truth that Jesus Christ is risen, He is risen indeed!

As a part of Christ's Church, we will sing, rejoice and hear again the Sunday story of Christ the Lord raised from the dead. In the resurrection message, I will consider how the birth of the church is one of the evidences for the veracity of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is a remarkable story.

On a Friday more than 2000 years ago, from 9:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon, storm clouds of darkness, despair and death hovered over Jerusalem. The Apostle John and a few of the women disciples remained at the cross until 3:00, when Jesus, unable to raise his head, suffocated and died. An eerie daytime darkness filled the earth; the curtain in the temple mysteriously split asunder. Jesus who had taught, loved, healed multitudes of men, women and children and five days earlier triumphantly entered Jerusalem as the Messiah and King was now dead.

As the sun went down on Friday evening and Saturday arrived, the disciples of Jesus observed the Sabbath. The Sabbath commenced Friday evening and ended on Saturday evening. The Sabbath was ordained to be a day of rest. This Friday evening and Saturday promised no Sabbath rest.

The mysterious daytime blackness of Friday had lifted and relocated in their souls. Their Master and best friend had died along with their hopes and dreams. But they had no time feel sorrow and process grief. The primary concern on Saturday was not dashed Kingdom hopes but their own fate. The same Roman guards and religious leaders who arrested Jesus on Thursday night outside Gethsemane may soon come to arrest them. As the Sabbath ended and Sunday was soon to come the disciples must face an uncertain and tumultuous and bleak tomorrow.

Yet this same group of disciples birthed a Kingdom movement of joy called the church in the same city where Jesus and their dreams died. What happened between restless and fear-filled Saturday and Sunday? What occurred is one of the most compelling evidences of the veracity of the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ and the birth of the church.

Phillip Yancy, in his book, "The Jesus I never knew says it this way. "That Jesus succeeded in changing a snuffling band of unreliable followers into fearless evangelists, that eleven men who had deserted him at death now went to martyrs' graves avowing their faith in a resurrected Christ, that these few witnesses managed to set loose a force that would overcome violent opposition first in Jerusalem and then in Rome—this remarkable sequence of transformation offers the most convincing evidence for the Resurrection.