

PFBC NEWSLETTER
APRIL
2024

MISSION FOCUS

*John and Sandy Mackin
Serving with Cru*



When we were in college in the 1970's, we often heard the challenges: "Help fulfill the Great Commission in this generation," "Win the campus today, the world tomorrow," and "Come Help Change the World." Having committed our lives to Christ in college, our hearts responded to God's call and we joined the staff of Cru. Nearly 50 years later, we are still thrilled to be part of God's great plan for spreading the Gospel and building multiplying disciples around the world.

After a few years in Philadelphia, God led us to the Philippines for 16 years, and then to Penn State in 1998, where we serve with a specialized ministry of Cru called the Epic Movement, which ministers to Asian-American students.

There are over 1 million Asian-American college students in the U.S.A. The vast majority do not know Jesus. We seek to share the Gospel with students and help those who respond to grow into faithful disciples, actively involved in the Great Commission. To that end, we have a weekly Large Group meeting, small group Bible studies, one-on-one discipleship appointments, retreats, conferences, and summer missions. Currently, we have about 70 students involved here at Penn State. We are seeking to equip students for a life time of ministry in local churches and in the workplace, as well as in Christian service. A number of our alumni have become pastors or missionaries (serving in East Asia, Thailand, the Philippines, and the U.S.A.) We are deeply grateful to PFBC for your faithful support, both in prayer and financially. Thank you!!

**Please pray for unbelievers who come to our meetings (or are friends with our students) that they would commit themselves to Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

**Please pray for the believers in our movement to grow in their knowledge and love for the Lord, and become multiplying disciples.

**Please pray for our student Bible study leaders and other student leaders who lead various teams (prayer, praise, outreach, large group meetings, etc.) to walk closely with the Lord and serve out of grace and love.

PASTOR'S NOTES

Pastor Jeremy

Coming off just celebrating the resurrection of Christ, it has been on my mind to share with you some of the evidence for the resurrection. These specific things I did not have time this year to work in to the sermons, but here are some very helpful things to know to encourage you in your faith!

Biblical Evidence for the Resurrection

The biblical evidence for Jesus' resurrection is compelling and can be briefly summarized in 10 points. Each of these points is consistent, and together they reveal that the Bible is emphatically and repeatedly clear on the fact of Jesus resurrection.

#1) Jesus' resurrection was prophesied in advance. Roughly 700 years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah promised that Jesus would be born into humble circumstances to live a simple life, die of real death, and then rise to take away our sin.

#2) Jesus predicted his resurrection. On numerous occasions Jesus plainly promised he would die and rise three days later.

#3) Jesus died. Before Jesus died, he underwent a sleepless night of trials and beatings that left him exhausted. He was then scourged a punishment so horrendous that many men died from it before even making it to their crucifixion. Jesus was crucified, and a professional executioner declared him dead. To ensure Jesus was dead, a spear was thrust through his side and a mixture of blood and water poured out of his side because the spear burst his heart sac. Jesus dead body was wrapped in upwards of 100 lbs. of linens and spices, which, even if he was able to somehow survive the beatings, floggings, crucifixion, and a pierced heart, would have killed him by asphyxiation. Even after all this Jesus somehow survived (which would in itself be a miracle) he would not have endured 3 days without food, water, or medical attention in a cold tomb carved out of rock. In summary, Jesus died.

#4) Jesus was buried in a tomb that was easy to find. Some 700 years before Jesus was born, God promised through Isaiah that Jesus would be assigned to "grave" with a rich man in his death". This was incredibly unlikely, because Jesus was a very poor man who could not have afforded an expensive burial plot. Following Jesus' death, though, a wealthy and well-known man named Joseph of Arimathea gifted his expensive tomb for the burial of Jesus. As a result, the place of Jesus burial was easy to confirm. Joseph who owned the tomb, governmental leaders and their soldiers who were assigned to guard the tomb, and the disciples and women who visited the tomb and found it empty all knew exactly where Jesus dead body was laid to rest. Had Jesus truly not risen to death, it would have been very easy to prove it by opening the tomb and presenting Jesus dead body as evidence.

#5) Jesus appeared physically, not just spiritually, alive three days after his death. Following Jesus' resurrection, many people touched his physical body: his disciples clung to his feet, Mary clung to him, and Thomas the doubter put his hand into the open spear hole in Jesus side. Jesus also appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, but they were uncertain if he had truly physically risen from death. Still, Jesus was emphatic about his bodily resurrection and went way out of his way to prove it: "

"As they were talking about these things Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!", but they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your heart. See my hands and my feet, that it is myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have and when he had said this he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they were still disbelieving for joy and wondering, he said to them have you anything to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate before them."

Furthermore, Jesus appeared physically alive over the course of 40 days to as large as 500 people at a time. It is also significant to note that no credible historical evidence from that period exists to validate any alternative explanation for Jesus' resurrection other than his literal bodily resurrection.

#6) Jesus resurrected body was the same as his pre resurrection body. His disciples recognized him as the same person who had been crucified, and Mary Magdalene recognized him by the sound of his voice. While Jesus resurrection body was the same, it was transformed. This explains why Jesus was not always immediately recognized after his resurrection, that seemed to appear and reappear mysteriously as James Orr noted, "In the narratives... it is implied that there are there was something strange something

unfamiliar or mysterious in his aspect, which prevented his immediate recognition... which held them in awe." Paul explains this phenomenon in the lengthiest treatment of the nature of a resurrection body in all Scripture (1 Corinthians 15), "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body". This "spiritual body" refers to the resurrected body that has been perfected in its glorious state by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#7) Jesus' resurrection was recorded as Scripture shortly after it occurred. Mark's gospel account for the days leading up to the Jesus' crucifixion mentions the high priest without naming him. It can logically be inferred that that Mark did not mention the high priest by name because he expected his readers to know who he was speaking of. Since Caiaphas was high priest from 18 to 37 AD, the latest possible date for the tradition is AD 37. This date is so close to the death of Jesus that there would not have been sufficient time for a legend of his resurrection to have developed. This proves that the biblical record of Jesus' resurrection was penned while the eyewitnesses were still alive to verify the facts. Thus, his resurrection is not a mythical legend that developed long after the time of Jesus. In fact, John Rogers, the former Dean of Trinity Episcopal school of ministry, says, "This is the sort of data that historians of antiquity drool over."

#8) Jesus' resurrection was celebrated in the earliest church creeds and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Paul says, "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." This statement is widely accepted as the earliest church creed, which began circulating as early as AD 30-36, shortly after Jesus' resurrection. Concerning the early age of this creed, there was no sufficient time between the crucifixion and the creed for any legend about Jesus' resurrection to accrue. In addition, the witnesses mentioned were still alive and available to be questioned about the facts surrounding the resurrection. The earliest date of this creed also proves that the church did not corrupt the truth about Jesus with fables and folklores. Rather, the early church simply clung to the plain and interconvertible facts of Jesus death, burial, and resurrection.

#9) Jesus' resurrection convinced his family to worship him as God. James, Jesus' half-brother, was originally opposed to the claims of deity by his brother. The transformation occurred in James, though, after he saw his brother resurrected from death. James went on to pastor the church in Jerusalem and authored the New Testament Epistle bearing his name. He was also actively involved in shaping the early church, which suffered and died to proclaim to everyone that Jesus is the one true God. Also, Jesus' mother Mary was part of the early church that prayed to and worshipped her son as God, as was Jesus' older brother Jude, who wrote a book of the New Testament bearing his name. While it is not impossible to imagine Jesus convincing some people that he was God if he were not, it is impossible to conceive of Jesus convincing his own mother and brothers to suffer persecution in this life and risk the torments of hell and eternal life for worshipping him as the one true God unless he truly was.

#10) Jesus' resurrection was confirmed by his most bitter enemies, such as Paul. Paul was a devout Jewish Pharisee who routinely persecuted and killed Christians. After an encounter with the risen Christ, Paul was converted and became the most dynamic defender and expander of the church. Had Jesus not truly risen from death, it is absurd to assume that Paul would ever have worshipped him as God particularly when Paul rightly believed that worshipping a false God would send one into the eternal flames of hell. Simply, Paul hated Jesus and never would have changed his religious practice unless Jesus had risen from death to prove him wrong. Furthermore, Paul insisted that Jesus had arisen in almost all of his letters that are saved for us in the New Testament.

Circumstantial Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection

Effects have causes. Jesus' resurrection is no exception, as is evident by eight effects caused by it. Together, they are compelling circumstantial evidence for Jesus' resurrection. Further for those wanting to deny Jesus' resurrection, the burden of proof remains on them to account for these multiple effects with a reasonable cause. Craig explains, "Anyone who denies this explanation is rationally obligated to produce a more plausible cause of Jesus' resurrection and to explain how it happened." He goes on to assert, "The conclusion that God raised him up is virtually inescapable. Only a sterile, academic skepticism resists this inevitable inference."

#1) Jesus' disciples were transformed. Prior to the resurrection, his disciples were timid and fearful, even hiding when Jesus appeared to them. Following the resurrection, however, they were all transformed into bold witnesses to what they had seen and heard, even to the point of dying in shame and poverty for their convictions, including Peter.

Regarding the apostles' eyewitness testimony to Jesus resurrection, Simon Greenleaf, a professor of law at Harvard University and a world renowned scholar on the rules of legal evidence, said it was "impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they had narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact."

#2) Jesus disciples remained loyal to Jesus as their victorious Messiah. Modern-day messiahs include, for example, politicians who propose to save and deliver us from a terrible fate such as terrorism, poverty, or unreasonable taxation. Supporters flock around their messiah in hopes that he will deliver on his promise to make their dreams come true. However, when a messiah fails to deliver as promised, his followers either abandon both the cause and the messiah, or they retain the cause and abandon the messiah to instead pursue another messiah. Either way, a failed messiah is a forgotten messiah. However, Jesus disciples did not abandon their cause of forgiven sin and life with God or their devotion to Jesus as their victorious Messiah. Furthermore, their devotion to both their cause and Messiah grew in numbers and passionate devotion. They endured a widespread persecution and even martyrdom, which would have been unthinkable had Jesus merely died and failed to rise as he promised he would. On this point the story in Kenneth Scott LaTourette has said, "It was the conviction of the resurrection of Jesus which lifted his followers out of the despair into which his death had cast them and which led to the perpetuation of the movement begun by him. But for their profound belief that the crucified had risen from the dead and that they had seen him and talked with him, the death of Jesus and even Jesus himself would probably have been all but forgotten."

#3) The disciples had exemplary character. To claim that the disciples preached obvious lies and deluded people into dying for the world's greatest farce, one would have first to find credible evidence to challenge the character of the disciples. Also, these men were devout Jews who knew that if they worshiped a false God and encouraged others to do the same, they would be sentenced by God to the fires of eternal hell for violating the first two commandments. Lastly, does not such egregious lying conflict with the character of men and women who gave their lives to feeding the poor, caring for widows and orphans, and helping the herding and the needy?

#4) Worship changed. The early church stopped worshipping on Saturday as Jews had for thousands of years, and suddenly began worshipping on Sunday in memory of Jesus' Sunday resurrection. The Sabbath was so sacred to the Jews that they would not have ceased to obey one of the 10 commandments unless Jesus had resurrected in fulfillment of their Old Testament Scriptures. Yet, by the end of the 1st century, Sunday was called the Lord's Day. Not only did the day of worship change after the resurrection of Jesus, but so did the object of worship. Considering that one of the 10 commandments also forbids the worship of false gods, it is impossible to conceive of devout Jews simply worshipping Jesus as the one true God without the proof of Jesus resurrection. According to even non-Christian historians, multitudes began worshipping Jesus as the one true God after his resurrection. For example, Lucian of Samosata was a non-Christian Assyrian Roman satirist who, around AD 170 wrote,

"The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day - the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rights, was a crucified on that account... You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains their contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original law giver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws."

Additionally, the early church rejected the observances of the law because they saw it as having been fulfilled in Jesus; thus, the law was no longer binding upon them in the same way as it had been for over 1000 years. This was a cataclysmic shift in belief that was only considered possible because a new epic had been ushered in by the resurrection of Jesus.

Lastly, God's people welcomed the sacraments of communion and baptism into their worship of Jesus as God. In communion in the early Christians remembered Jesus' death in their place for their sins. In baptism they remembered Jesus' resurrection in their place for their salvation and anticipated their personal future resurrection.

#5) Women discovered the empty tomb. The women who discovered the empty tomb were mentioned by name, were well known in the early church, and could have easily been questioned to confirm their findings if they were untrue. Moreover, the testimony of women was not respected in that culture, it would have been more likely for men to report discovering the empty tomb if the account was fictitious and an attempt were being made to concoct a credible lie about Jesus' resurrection. Therefore, the fact that women are said to have been the first to arrive at Jesus empty tomb is confirmation that the account of Scripture is factual, not contrived.

#6) The entirety of the early church preaching was centered on the historical fact of Jesus' resurrection. If the empty tomb were not a widely accepted fact, the disciples would have reasoned with the skeptics of their day to defend the central issue of their faith. Instead, we see the debate occurring not about whether the tomb was empty, but why it was empty. Also, nowhere in the preaching of the early church was the empty tomb explicitly defended for the simple reason that it was widely known as an agreed upon fact. Furthermore, a reading of the book of Acts shows that on virtually every occasion that preaching and teaching occurred, the resurrection of Jesus from death was the central truth being communicated because

it had changed human history and could not be ignored. Jesus' resurrection appears in twelve of the twenty-eight chapters in Acts which records the history of the early church.

#7) Jesus' tomb was not enshrined. Craig says, "It was customary in Judaism for the tomb of a prophet or a holy man to be preserved or venerated as a shrine. This was so because the bones of the prophet lay in the tomb and imparted to the site its religious values. If the remains were not there, then the grave would lose its significance as a shrine." Of the four major world religions based upon a founder as opposed to a system of ideas, only Christianity claims that the tomb of its founder is empty. Judaism looks back to Abraham, who died almost 4000 years ago, and still cares for his grave as a holy site at Hebron. Thousands visit Buddha's tomb in India every year. Islam founder Mohammed died on June 8th, 632, and his tomb in Medina is visited by millions of people every year. Additionally, Yamauchi has discovered evidence that the tombs of at least 50 prophets or other religious figures were enshrined as places of worship and veneration in Palestine around the same time as Jesus' death. Yet, according to James D. G. Done, there is "absolutely no trace" of any veneration at Jesus tomb. The obvious reason for this lack of veneration is that Jesus was not buried but instead resurrected.

#8) Christianity exploded on the earth and a few billion people today claim to be Christians. On the same day, in the same place, in the same way, two other men died, one on Jesus' left and one on his right. Despite the similarities, we do not know the names of these men, and billions of people do not worship them as God. Why? Because they remain dead and Jesus alone rose from the death and ascended into heaven, leaving the Christian church in his wake. On this point, C. F. D. Moule of Cambridge University says, "The birth and rapid rise of the Christian church... remain an unsolved enigma for any historian who refuses to take seriously the only explanation offered by the church itself."

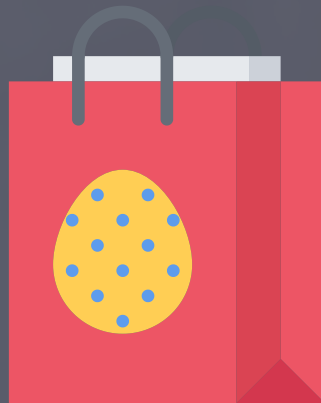
Source: Driscoll, Mark & Breshears Gerry. Doctrine What Christians Believe. Wheaton, Illinois. Crossway 2010, pg. 287-296.

PFBC KIDS

Babette Manning

Indoor Park will be having the Annual Easter Egg hunt on Tuesday, April 2nd with 2000 eggs on the lawn for the kids to "find". This is always a great day of fun, the kids get treat bags with a book telling the Gospel story. Thank you to Billy Baughman for filling the treat bags! Thank you Godsway Dzade for filling many of the Easter eggs for this year's egg hunt!

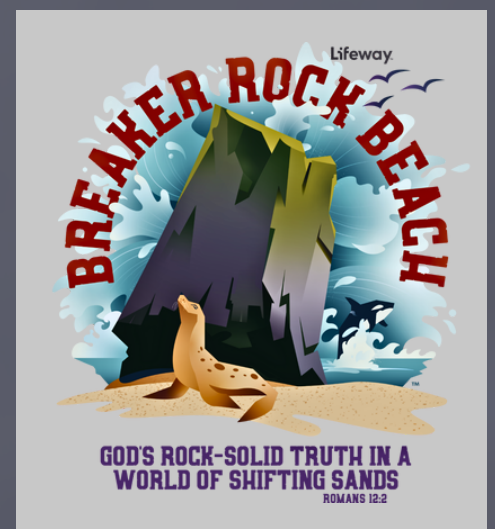
Indoor Park will finish another season on Thursday, April 11th.



VBS: Vacation Bible School will be held July 29th - August 2nd. This will be from 9:00 am - noon each day.

I am looking for classroom teachers and guides. If you would like to get involved, please contact me. babette@parkforestbaptist.org Our theme for the year is Breaker Rock Beach.

VBS Workdays: Our first workday is scheduled for Thursday, April 18th from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. We will begin tracing, cutting, painting and more to make decorations for VBS.



April Craft:

Make an umbrella for "April Showers"

Cut flowers, a sun and a handle for your umbrella out of the colored paper. Use a hole punch to punch holes in your plate to hang the flowers from. Attach your flowers to the plate by string or fishing line. Glue the sun and the handle on your umbrella. Glue cotton balls on the plate for clouds. You can hang your umbrella in a window or in your bedroom.



Supplies:

Paper plate (cut in half)
Colored paper
string or fishing line
hole punch
glue stick
cotton balls (for clouds)



April Bible Reading:

Proverbs 27 & 28
Proverbs 29 & 30
Proverbs 31

Jenna's

Jokes



1.) If there was a country where people only drove pink cars, how would you name it after a flower?

2.) Name a bird you shouldn't take to the bank?

3.) Why couldn't the flower ride a bike on the first day of spring?

Answers: 1) You can name it Pink - Carnation!
2) A robin! 3) It didn't have petals yet!

Young Adult Ministry

YAM

Early this month, there are a handful of young adult ladies joining women of all ages on the Women's Retreat. We can pray for God to be working in their hearts and deepening their relationships with Him, as well as between all the women attending the retreat. The young men also have their monthly opportunity to attend the Men's Breakfast on April 6th, 8AM, at PFBC to enjoy a casual breakfast and devotional together. If you'd like to know more about the breakfasts, contact John Askey!



Last month, the Men's Spring Kickoff was well attended and greatly enjoyed by men of all ages... particularly as they competed in trivia questions about different generations, entertainment, and more! Thank you to all those who helped in planning, setting up, and cooking.



Have you heard the exciting news? Jude and Yawen Anderson are hosting a book club! They'll be starting with Deeper by Dane C. Ortlund as it focuses on practical ways to grow in your faith. If you're interested or have questions, contact Jude!



MEN'S MINISTRY

Men's Breakfast:

Saturday, April 6th at 8 AM.

Join us for bacon, eggs, pancakes, juice, coffee, and a devotional - *Patterns of Evidence: The Moses Controversy (session 2)*. Contact John Askey.



WOMEN'S MINISTRY



Ladies Retreat

We are heading on our Ladies Retreat at Camp Hebron, the first weekend of April. We are looking forward to a wonderful weekend looking into the Word and being with friends.

Here's some prayer requests for our retreat –

- There are 26 ladies attending the retreat, some have never come on a retreat before.
- All the families back at home, while ladies are away.
- The Hearts of the ladies as we look into God's Word about Trusting God More.
- Physical safety and wellness for those attending.

Thank you to the Retreat Planning Team for all their suggestions and help in making the retreat a success – Priscilla, Ellen, Meg, Lauren, Linda and Stephenie!

Please look in May's Newsletter for highlights of the retreat! We will be announcing the dates for 2025 retreat early summer.

Thursday Night Bible Study

The Bible Study group will be taking a break this spring. Please stay tuned to what the study will be for the Fall of 2024. See Estelle for any questions.

Mom's Life group Gathering

Let's grab dinner and hang out on Friday, April 19. We will head to Panera Bread in State College (N. Atherton location) at 6 PM. Please let Hilary know if you are coming.



Upcoming Events



Sunday, April 21st & April 28th at 6 PM.

Interested in learning about PFBC's beliefs and why membership is important to the local church? Sign up for the two-part class!

Scan QR Code



PFBC's Lost & Found Box: PFBC's Lost & Found box will be cleaned out on Monday, April 15th. Please claim your items! Anything left is donated to Good Will. Contact Diana Crom.



RIOT Report

Pastor Jon

Worship – What is it? When should we do it? Who is it for? Why do we worship? Where should we worship?

These were all questions that we looked at during our lesson series called "Marvel." We learned that worship isn't just songs that we sing on a Sunday morning or evening. Worship is a lifestyle that takes place everywhere we are. We discussed how worship might cost us something; it should happen in all areas of life; worship should take place in the highs, the lows, and in the mundane times in life; worship remembers what God has done for us. We finished the series off with a great night of worship. We took communion, prayed through the ACTS method, meditated on some of the names of God, nailed confessions to the cross, had two places where we could respond to God through art, and had an art gallery of images from some stories and parables of Jesus. We also had times of worship through song. It was a great way to finish off the series on worship.

We are starting a series on Apologetics called "Truth Be Told." During this series of lessons, our students will be given tips and points that will help them better be able to explain the hope that they have in Jesus.

