

Easter Sunday - March 31

“Fellow Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having released him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.” Acts 2:22-24

At first, I wasn't sure how I felt about the Lenten Devotional having the same theme as the Advent series. During Advent, we explored how God broke through in a manger in Bethlehem. But then, after further reflection, I realized that Holy Week is all about God breaking through. God broke through as Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday. God broke through in a meal on Maundy Thursday that we continue to celebrate allowing God to break through in our lives. God broke through as Jesus knelt down and washed his disciples' feet teaching us to serve. God broke through as Jesus endured the cross revealing God's overwhelming love for us. On this Easter Sunday morning, we know that God broke through because the stone is rolled away and the tomb is empty. Christ is risen! God is breaking through!

This Lent we have been looking at the life of Peter in our study and sermon series. In his sermon in Acts 2, Peter proclaims “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know - this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having released him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.” Peter proclaims that God is breaking through in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The world tried to crucify him, but God raised him up. This was part of God's plan. Peter says, "it was impossible for him to be held in [death's] power." Christ is risen! God is breaking through!

Because we know that Jesus conquered the grave, Easter is a time when we remember that there is always hope. The worst day is not the last day. Death does not have the final word. So, in the midst of whatever we are going through today, God wants to break through and offer us hope. In the midst of our grief, God offers comfort. In the midst of our conflict (internal and external), God offers peace. In the midst of our despair, God offers hope. Easter is the reminder that God wants to break through in our lives to bring wholeness and healing. In the places where we feel like darkness abounds, God's light is shining through today. Christ is risen! God is breaking through!

God has broken through in so many ways in my own life, bringing hope, wholeness and healing to places that looked bleak, weary, and grim. However, as I write this, I am not experiencing any great burdens. There is nothing weighing heavy on me today. That may be your experience as well. If so, you are needed, for this is when you need to allow God to work in you to break through in the lives of others. We need to share the story of how God has been at work in our lives. We need to tell others that there is hope. We need to find ways to allow God's light to shine in the darkness. We want the world to know that Christ is risen! God is breaking through!

Ephesians 3:20 says, "Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us." Did you catch that? Go back and read that verse one more time, because this is important. This verse gives us a couple of vital reminders. First, it tells us that God is able to do more than we can imagine. That is good news! However, the part that I don't want you to miss is that God is able to do this "by his power at work within us." God's power is at work within us. We are the hands and feet of Christ. We are the ones to carry out God's work in the world. We are the way in which God continues to break

through. So, I want to challenge you to allow God's power to be at work within you today that God's light will shine and God's love will be shared as the world discovers Christ is risen! God is breaking through!

Pastor Justin Williams

Prayer: Gracious and Loving God, we are in awe of Your power as we celebrate the triumphant victory of Your Son, Jesus Christ, over death. We thank you for the truth that "Christ is risen! God is breaking through!"

May the reality of your breakthrough fill our hearts with hope, peace, and joy today. In the midst of our challenges and triumphs, may we remember that Your power is at work within us, enabling us to be vessels of Your love and light in the world.

Empower us to carry the message of Easter into the world. Help us share the story of your breakthrough in our lives, offering hope to those who need it most. In times of darkness, may Your light shine through us, and in times of despair, may Your hope spring forth.

Thank you for the promise that Your power exceeds our wildest imaginations. May we, as individuals and as a community, be transformed by Your grace, living as witnesses to the ongoing reality that "Christ is risen! God is breaking through!" Amen.