



EASTER WEEKEND

When Heaven Meets Earth

Pastor Jared Herd

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LEADER'S GUIDE

1. When was the last time you had to adjust to a new normal? What was the process like?

This conversation-starter will help frame a conversation about how things used to be (before Christ) both for the world and for each one of us individually because of the resurrection. Pastor Jared opened the message by reminding us that we are constantly adjusting to a new normal. Sometimes the new normal is just getting used to a bunch of new bottles of product in your shower and sometimes it's the birth of a child or a new job or a move or because now you're parenting your parents. Chat about all your new normals. What was it like getting there? Or learning to rest there.

2. Do you usually embrace change willingly or do you like routine and the familiar? Why do you think that's how you are?

Sometimes a new normal is great and we're praising God, and sometimes it takes us to the mat and we're questioning God. Sometimes we go willingly into the new uncharted territory and sometimes we go kicking and screaming. Talk about how and when our response is stubbornness as opposed to willingness. Fear of the unknown and not wanting to give up control might be two things your group brings up.

3. Take a look at Hebrews 9:11-15.

Hebrews 9:11-15 (NIV)

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may

receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Before Christ's death and resurrection, what was the old way of getting right with God?

Before Christ, God had the same requirements for the forgiveness of sins, blood had to be shed as a picture of how devastating sin was/is to our relationship with God. That's why there were those animal sacrifices for all those centuries. So that the people would get it. Sin destroys. Atonement restores.

What did Pastor Jared tell us the layout of the temple in Jerusalem was like? What separated the people of God from God's presence, physically and spiritually?

Remind everyone what Jared told us about the layout of the temple and its beauty and grandeur and purpose. It was THE place where people went to be made right with God. Inside it, protected from view, was the very Presence of God in what is called the Holy of Holies or Most Holy Place. A massive curtain, 60 feet long and 4 inches thick, separated the people from the Holy of Holies. The average person never went in there. It was just for the high priest, who went in as a mediator between the people and God, to make atonement for himself and everyone else. The veil (curtain) was physical and metaphorical. It represented that separation between God and humankind.

4. What does it mean that in Jesus Christ, heaven meets earth?

Jesus is God but He became man and came to earth to live the life we could not live (sinless) and be our substitute. We just looked at this verse that confirms this the previous week: **"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."** John 1:14

How would you explain this to someone else?

We can definitely see this played out at Easter, because when Christ died for all, that massive curtain was literally torn into two from top to bottom. Access to God, denied to everyone but the high priest, was now available to all because of Jesus.

What are some other ways to explain to someone what Jesus bringing heaven to earth looks like?

5. The seven different signs we've been talking about share some similarities. What are they?

Think back over the seven weeks and look at what was true of all the signs performed:

WEEK 1	Turning water into wine
WEEK 2	The healing of an official's son
WEEK 3	The healing of the paralyzed man at the pool
WEEK 4	Feeding the multitude
WEEK 5	Jesus walks on water; calms the storm
WEEK 6	The healing of a man born blind
WEEK 7	The raising of Lazarus from the dead

No right or wrong answers, just share what you and your group observe. Some commonalities: All are miraculous in nature, unexplainable by any conventional means, all affirm Christ's deity, all were motivated by the desire that we believe is who He said he is. Others?

How does each sign speak to the spiritual needs we all have and Christ's sole ability to meet them?

Make a list of what the problem is for each circumstance. Perhaps give each person or couple one of the weeks and five minutes to identify the problem and what Jesus's solution was. For example, in WEEK 1, the problem was the bride's family ran out of wine – a highly shameful situation in that culture and Jesus answered with lavish abundance. If you will remember, this is a picture of our shameful condition and Jesus' lavishly abundant answer to our problem.

Here are the rest of the takeaways if you find you need them:

WEEK 2	It's not the strength of your faith that matters, but rather the strength of the object of your faith.
WEEK 3	The person who can be made whole and well is the one whose desperation is greater than their pride.
WEEK 4	Jesus alone is the Bread of Life, the only one who satisfies our need for all time.
WEEK 5	Just because a situation is difficult doesn't mean God isn't in it
WEEK 6	Trust is strengthened when you can't see the whys but you still put your trust in the Who.
WEEK 7	God sometimes delays and even does the opposite of what we ask Him to do, but He always the bigger, eternal picture in mind.

6. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 1 Peter 2:4-5.

1 Cor 6:19-20 (NIV)

19 Do you not know that your bodies are **temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you**, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

1 Peter 2:4-5

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

What do these verses say about us?

These verses assure us of the new normal that is the result of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Most Holy Place is no longer a coordinate on a GPS map (that was the old way), but is now inside every person in whom the Holy Spirit is at home. This is the new way. When you become a believer, the third person of the Trinity comes to live inside you. The presence of God is in you, just like it had been in the Most Holy Place in the temple in Jerusalem.

What do they have to do with Christ's resurrection?

It is only because of the resurrection that we have been made new like this, transformed from being apart and alienated from God, to those brought near to Him because of the cross.

“[R]emember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” – Eph 2:12-13

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of[a] your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation. “Colossians 1:21-22

7. What does it mean to you that as a believer in Christ, you're now the place where heaven meets earth?

Spend time reflecting on your own personal reactions around the room to this amazing truth.

How does/should that affect your everyday life?

Does it affect your everyday life? Are you aware of how it affects it? Do you find yourself squelching it or celebrating it or are you not even cognizant of its effects? Discuss.

8. Pastor Jared said we are Easter people living in a Good Friday world. What did he mean?

As followers of the risen Christ, we are bearers of His gospel, the best news ever and the only solution to every person's worst problem. What else? Share other insights.

How are we to live then?

Here's one way to look at how to live as Easter people in possession of the best news ever:

Consider adopting the habit of preaching the gospel to yourself, every day as a way of being an Easter person in a Good Friday world. Author and theologian Paul Tripp said: “No one is more influential in your life than you are. Because no one talks to you more than you do.”

There is a difference between merely reminding ourselves of truth, and preaching to ourselves the truth of the gospel. The link below features an interview with Paul Tripp on this topic. The first 4:08 minutes would be good for you to watch as you prepare to lead your group time. Or perhaps have your group listen to these first four minutes:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/preach-the-gospel-to-yourself>

The first four minutes explain that we are going to think (meditate) on something. We are going to preach to ourselves SOMETHING. Daily make it the gospel of Jesus. Not the gospel of envy or loneliness or self-satisfaction or some other pursuit.

We are daily interpreting life (meditating on it) and those thoughts will determine our actions for the day.

Something to share with your group, especially if you and your group members have been Christians for a long time and the gospel seems like something from your long-ago past: The gospel isn't just for non-believers who need to hear it and believe it to be saved, it's also for believers to remind themselves of every day. Our everyday lives will be different if we begin each new day telling ourselves anew and again that we were lost without Christ, and He not only paid the debt we owed, He gave us His righteousness. He took what was ours and gave us what was His. Reconnecting with the death and resurrection of Jesus every day will change the way you live every day. We reconnect primarily by reading and meditating on scripture; verses like Psalm 32:1-2 and Romans 8:1-2 and many thousands more. Preach to yourself the gospel every day and you will be an Easter person in a Good Friday world because your love and gratitude for what Jesus did for you will be your primary affection and focus. That will change how you live and how people are affected by you and through you.

Psalm 32:1-2 “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
2 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Romans 8:1 “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”

MEMORIZE Romans 8:38-39 – “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.”

CRB CORE VALUE THOUGHT: Living your life as an Easter person in a world that needs a savior is how you reach outward to others with the saving love of Jesus Christ. By the way you live. This week, consider who in your midst you can be an Easter person to in a tangible way. Pray for an opportunity to interact with that person and then be ready to respond.