Easter Services

- Easter | Order of the Offerings in Leviticus | April 20th 2025
- Easter | The Savior of the World | April 5th 2026

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As we gather together on Easter we are here to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We celebrate that the tomb is empty. We celebrate that He is alive. For any of this to make sense though we must recognize the death that took place. The tomb was once filled. For Jesus to be resurrected He had to die first.

1 Corinthians 15:36-37; 42-44 ESV

> (36) You foolish person! **What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.**
> (37) And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.
> (**42**) **So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.**
> (43) It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.
> (44) It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. **If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.**

Jesus could not come to life until He died. The body that went into the tomb was His physical body. When a seed is planted no gardener would be satisfied if another seed came up. The seed needs to give life to the plant. Jesus' physical body went to the tomb and it enabled Him to be raised in a perfect resurrected body. A body of glory, and power. A body of true eternal life. The disciples and His followers did not understand this. When His dead body was put into the tomb they thought that was the end.

Luke 24:1-7 ESV

> (1) But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, **taking the spices they had prepared.**
> (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,
> (3) but when they went in they **did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.**
> (4) While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.
> (5) And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, **"Why do you seek the living among the dead?**
> (6) **He is not here, but has risen.** Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee,
> (7) **that the Son of Man must be delivered** into the hands of sinful men **and be crucified and on the third day rise."**

The woman approached the tomb with spices to care for a dead body which they could not find. The angels point out their flaw. Jesus is alive, and they were looking for someone living in a place of the dead. He is resurrected. He had taught them this very truth but it did not make sense at the time. After His resurrection Jesus will end up showing His 11 disciples how His death and resurrection fulfilled scripture.

Luke 24:44-46 ESV

> (44) Then He said to them, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about **Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."**
> (45) Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

> (46) and said to them, “Thus it is written**, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,**

Jesus’ death and resurrection fulfilled what was written about Him in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Jesus mentions these three because they are **the three groupings of the Old Testament.** He is saying the entire Old Testament pointed to this truth. He then enabled them to understand the Word. They knew the Old Testament well, but they did not understand yet how it all was about Him. The Old Testament speaks to the need for Jesus to die and be raised again.

We hear Jesus say the entire Old Testament points to His death and resurrection and yet at times I don’t know if we fully believe it. We have been in a study of Leviticus and my hope is that this truth is more clear then it ever has been. Throughout Leviticus we have seen how each offering pointed to Jesus and the need for His sacrificial death.

Leviticus 17:11 ESV

> (11) For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, **for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.**

The life of an animal or a person is represented by the blood. When the priest would drain the blood of an animal it showed they died. It is through blood that atonement can be made. **Sin can only be dealt with through blood, through a death.**

Romans 6:23 ESV

> (23)**For the wages of sin is death**, but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The free gift of eternal life cannot be given until the wage of sin has been paid. Until there was a perfect death. **The book of Leviticus has been full of death.** Each offering given is a reminder of the need of blood. Even the order the offerings points to what Jesus needed to accomplish. This order can be seen as the priest were consecrated.

Leviticus 9:3-4 ESV

> (3) And say to the people of Israel, ‘Take a male goat **for a sin offering**, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, **for a burnt offering,**
> (4) and an ox and a ram **for peace offerings**, to sacrifice before the LORD, **and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you.’”**

The offerings presented in Leviticus in Chapters 1-7 are in an order that enabled the priest to more easily **memorize and teach** them to the fellow priest. They are not presented in the order of worship. Here in chapter 9 as the priests are made ready to serve in the tabernacle we see the specific order of the offerings. It is this order that we will see repeated throughout the rest of Leviticus. **The sin offering comes first, then the whole burnt offering** which would have been accompanied by **the grain offering**, and **lastly the fellowship offering.**

This order is not accidental it reveals how we are to approach God. Without the presented blood of the sin offering we can have no access to God. **The sin offering has to be first.** Once access to God is established through the blood then a person can wholly dedicate themselves to God **through the whole burnt offering**. Once we are dedicated to God **we can praise Him through the fruit of our work** with the grain offering. **Then lastly we can worship Him for the peace** we have with Him with a peace offering. It is with the peace offering that we get to enjoy the **fellowship meal** and our relationship with God. **We try to reverse the order.** The world wants to enjoy peace first, without the other offerings.

John 16:33 ESV

> (33) I have said these things to you, **that in Me you may have peace**. **In the world you will have tribulation**. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Peace is only found in right relationship with Jesus. In the world we have been promised to have tribulation. We live in sin cursed bodies, on a sin cursed planet, with others sinners. The world only offers tribulation but He overcame the world. Peace is in Him.

Isaiah 26:3-4 NLT

> (3) You will keep **in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You!**
> (4) Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock.

Experiential daily peace is found when our thoughts are on Jesus and viewing life through His truth. He is the eternal rock. He alone offers us peace and satisfaction. **When we are in fellowship with Jesus we can experience His peace daily.**

Romans 8:5-6 ESV

> (5) For those who **live according to the flesh** set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
> (6) For **to set the mind on the flesh is death**, but **to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**

To live based on our flesh is death. It is walking in the Spirit and in His fellowship where life and peace can be found. It is the last offering because this fellowship is based on all the others. **This fellowship is only possible after the grain and whole burnt offering.**

The whole burnt offering symbolized giving your whole life to God and the grain offering was then worshipping Him with the fruit of your life. Daily Peace is only found when we walk with Him and have given our life to Him.

Romans 12:1-2 ESV

> (1) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**
> (2) Do not be **conformed to this world**, but **be transformed** by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Verse 2 points out an amazing truth **we are always in a process of change**. The question is what are we letting change us? The world is actively seeking to conform us to its mold. It tries to force believers **from the outside into a mold or pattern and remake us into its shape**. Conversely, **God wants to transform us from the inside out.** As a believer you have a new life in Jesus and He wants that to become visible and show on the outside. He wants to renew our mind through His truth. There is no neutral. **We are either being conformed or transformed every day.**

If we are being conformed by the world then we will not be walking in His peace. Each offering builds on the next. Yet none of these so far is what gives us access to God. **It is not your daily peace, your growth or transformation.** We are acceptable to God through one thing, the blood payment. It is through the blood that we can approach God.

Leviticus 16:1-3 ESV

(1) The LORD spoke to Moses **after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died,**
(2) and the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother **not to come at any time into the Holy Place** inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, **so that he may not die.** For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.
(3) **But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place**: with a bull from the herd **for a sin offering** and a ram for a burnt offering.

Last week we studied Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s sons. They approached God with an unauthorized, unacceptable fire and are killed for it. God is very clear with Aaron, **there is one way that He can approach God’s presence in the Holy of Holies, and that is through blood.** He is not allowed in without the blood of a sin offering. The burnt offering comes later and will not be given until after Aaron leaves the Holy of Holies and the blood has been offered. (Lev. 16:24) **We cannot walk in the daily peace Jesus offers and be in fellowship with Him until we have given our life daily to Him. We cannot give ourself to God if our sin has not been paid for.** Without the blood payment none of the other offerings are possible.

Our society is ok to hear about the peace that Jesus can offer, the dedication He desires and even how He can transform our thinking to make us more loving and caring. The idea of our need for a blood sacrifice to have life is offensive and yet it is the only life giving message. We are sinners and deserve death, and God’s wrath. This is why we have so much to celebrate today. Jesus was willing to be the perfect blood payment, the perfect sin offering that enables all the others.

Romans 5:8-11 ESV

(8) but **God shows His love** for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
(9) Since, therefore, **we have now been justified by His blood**, much more shall we be **saved by Him from the wrath of God.**
(10) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, **shall we be saved by His life.**
(11) More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

Jesus was not just an example of humility, or caring for people. He came to die for sinners. God showed His great love for us by having Jesus die. We are justified, declared righteous because of His perfect sin offering. **We are saved from the wrath God had for our sins.** His death secured our reconciliation. His resurrection enabled us to live for Him. Once we believe in Jesus then we can begin to learn how to give our life to Him, then we can glorify Him though the fruits in our life, then we can walk in fellowship with Him. **Leviticus points to the need for the messiah to die and be the blood payment, but it also points to His resurrection.**

Leviticus 23:9-10 ESV

(9) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
(10)“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, **you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest,**

When Israel is living in the promised land they are to have a feast of the firstfruits from the harvest. After all the anticipation of prepping the fields, planting, weeding, and watering, **the first part of the harvest was to be God’s**. God wanted the firstfruits because it pointed to the fact that Jesus was going to be the firstfruits of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:19-34 ESV

> (20) But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, **the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.** (21) For as by a man came death, **by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.** (22) For as in Adam all die, **so also in Christ shall all be made alive.**
> (23) But each in His own order: **Christ the firstfruits**, then at His coming **those who belong to Christ.**

When Adam sinned, death came into the world and has reigned. It is a reality of life that we are uncomfortable talking about. Each offering of Leviticus reminds us of the death or sin demands. Each funeral and loved one who passes reminds us of how fleeting this life is. Yet we have the tremendous truth that Jesus is risen. **He is the firstfruit from the resurrection.** Through His death and resurrection He conquered death. As believer we will be resurrected because He is. Jesus is our risen savior!

Revelation 1:17-18 ESV

> (17) When I saw Him, I fell at His feet **as though dead**. But He laid His right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last,
> (18) and **the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore**, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

When John sees the resurrected Jesus he falls down as dead. Yet notice what truth Jesus encourages him with. **Jesus is the living one!** Death is no longer an enemy for believers. Jesus died but is alive forever. He conquered death and holds the keys to death and hades. The perfect payment was given and He defeated death by rising. Just as He had to die and put on His resurrected body, believers have resurrected eternal bodies waiting for us.

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 ESV

> (54) When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “**Death is swallowed up in victory.”**
> (55) **“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”**
> (56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.
> (57) But thanks be to God, **who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**
> (58) **Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.**

Death has been defeated! Jesus is resurrected and given us the victory. Jesus is the perfect sin offering. He gave His blood to pay for the wrath that our sins deserved. We have access to God because of what He has done. Then we can walk and enjoy all that He has for us. We can learn to give ourselves to Him and be transformed. We can walk in the fellowship and peace He offers. **If you trust in His blood, if you believe in Jesus, you will be resurrected.** Let us be steadfast, immovable, abounding in all that Jesus has for us, because we are going to see our risen savior face to face in a resurrected body. Let us live for that day, you will never regret it.

Easter | The Savior of the World | April 5th 2026

It really is hard to try and imagine the emotions of Jesus' apostles and disciples as the dawn broke on Easter Sunday. Of course, they did not know it would be Easter Sunday. In In Luke 24 **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome** went out early in the morning with the hope of completing the spices and wrappings that **Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus** had so hastily done on Friday. They were not eagerly anticipating His resurrection but were going there to lovingly care for His dead body. Mark informs us that on the walk to the tomb they were discussing and worried about how they would get the stone rolled away so they could care for Jesus' body. Their emotions must have surged when they saw the stone was already moved because now they would be able to accomplish their task. Then just as quickly, their emotions sunk as they saw the body of Jesus was gone. The last few days watching Jesus' arrest and death **had already left them emotionally and physically exhausted.** Now in their grief they could not even care for Jesus' body correctly.

It is in this moment that two angels appear and asked such an amazing question. **"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"** The women went to the cemetery to care for a dead body with spices. They lovingly sought out Jesus not to see if He was resurrected but to care for His body before decomposition progressed too far. **They were seeking the wrong thing, a dead person, so they were in the wrong place, a cemetery.** Jesus was no longer dead so He was not in a cemetery and He no longer needed the spices. The angels proclaimed the most amazing news **"He is not here, but has risen."** Jesus had conquered death and was alive in a resurrected body. This amazing truth was beyond anyone's thought or even imagination at the time. When the apostles are told, they at first dismissed it as an "**idle tale**." The were depressed, scared, exhausted, and fearful. The first easter was full of confusion and disappointment, until they found out what had taken place. The two disciples who were walking to Emmaus, show this well.

Luke 24:13-17 ESV

> (13) **That very day two of them** were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,
> (14) and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.
> (15) While they were talking and discussing together, **Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.** (16) But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him.
> (17) And He said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" **And they stood still, looking sad.**

As Jesus asked this question they stood in shock. Their grief and pain showed on their faces. **This word means to wear dark garments in mourning as your state of mind.** The anguish they were feeling was more then grieving the loss of a friend or teacher. They had many expectations of what Jesus would do.

Luke 24:18-24 ESV

> (18) Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered Him, **"Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know** the things that have happened there in these days?"
> (19) And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was **a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,**
> (20) and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be **condemned to death, and crucified Him.**

> (21) **But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel.** Yes, and besides all this, **it is now the third day** since these things happened.
> (22) Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, (23) and when **they did not find His body**, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, **who said that He was alive.**
> (24) Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but **Him they did not see."**

Cleopas expresses what so many of Jesus' followers were thinking. Jesus was a mighty prophet both in what He taught and the miracles He performed. Over time they had developed a real hope of what Jesus would accomplish. Dying a gruesome death on a cross as a condemned criminal was not one of them. They had hoped that He would be the one to redeem Israel. They thought He was **the destined one who came to rescue, set free, pay the ransom, for Israel.** As Cleopas shares this it is easy to hear the disappointment in his voice. **They thought that Jesus' death proved that He was not the redeemer, when the exact opposite is true.** It was through His death on the cross that Jesus paid for sin and could be the redeemer of not only Israel but the entire world.

1 John 4:14 ESV

> (14) And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent **His Son to be the Savior of the world.**

Israel knew they needed a redeemer, a savior. Rome was in charge, and they did not even have authority over their own country. The religious leaders were corrupt and the blessings that they were to enjoy in the promised land did not seem to be working. They kept failing at following the law. Ultimately life seemed unfulfilling in the promised land. They had a desperate need for a savior. **Seeing the need for a savior is not a new thought. The world has constantly been looking for one**. Jesus was not the first one to be declared the Savior of the World. At this time a common toast for the Greeks would be **"Zeus Soter" which is toasting to Zeus as Savior.** They would also toast to Hermes, Apollo, Hercules, or even Aphrodite. Each time declaring that they had hope in that false god to be the savior of the world.

It was not just false gods and religions that were declared to be the savior **but also political systems**. King Prusias I of Bithynia came and addressed the Roman Senate around 200 BC and called the senators **"Hail, ye savior gods." *(The Histories of Polybius)*.** The Romans thought they had perfected government and had such a confidence in their Senate that they thought it would be the savior of the World. We have other Greek and Roman writings where **doctors and philosophers** are called savior. Each time a savior is turned to, the hope is that it/they **will provide the solution to humanities problems.**

The world has always needed a savior. Our current culture uses different words but is constantly trusting in new solutions and ideas just like the Greeks and Romans. Each new leader, form of government, economic system, philosophy, technology or medical advancement is hoped to be the savior**. We keep turning to anything other then the true Savior.**

Isaiah 43:10-11 ESV

> (10) "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me **and understand that I am He. Before Me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after Me.**
> (11) I, I am the LORD, and **besides Me there is no savior.**

God wants us to understand that He is the only savior. There is no other god before or after Him. He alone can save us. He is the one we need and yet He is the one that we run in rebellion from. Instead of turning to God, we rely on anything else, even a political leader. The **Priene Calendar Inscription from 9 BC** gives us great insight into how **Ceaser Agustus** was viewed. He was the ruler when Jesus was born. In this inscription Ceaser Agustus is praised as ***"a savior, both for us and for our descendants that he might end war and arrange all things"*** and that His coming ***"was the beginning of the gospel for the world".*** The word Gospel is the same word that is used in the Bible and means the good news. The Romans were willing to share the gospel good news about Ceaser Augustus and hoped He would be the Savior. **There have been many saviors and many gospels shared about each one**. Yet Ceaser Augustus died in AD 14; wars are not ended and the world still needs a savior. This in part is why Jesus' disciples were so defeated by His death. They thought He was the redeemer, the savior, but now He is dead just like every other failed savior. What they didn't understand is that the truly good news of the gospel is the death and resurrection of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:1 ESV

> (1) Now I would remind you, brothers, **of the gospel I preached to you**, which you received, in which you stand,

This gospel is not about Ceaser Augustus, or the Roman Senate. This gospel is not about how humanity can solve our own problems if we would all work together. This gospel is not about how the right laws or systems would solve societies problems. The one true Gospel is Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:3 ESV

> (3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: **that Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures,
> (4) **that He was buried**, **that He was raised** on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,
> (5) and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
> (6) Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

The Gospel, the true good news is that Jesus is the savior of the world.

Every savior identifies a problem and offers a solution. Some hope to solve ignorance with education. Others aim to solve poverty with economics and trade. Jesus came to be the savior who paid for our sins. **Every other problem humanity has stems from our core problem as sinners.**

Romans 5:12 NLT

> (12) When Adam sinned, **sin entered the world**. Adam's sin brought death, **so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.**

We have disobeyed a holy God, and now life, creation, and our bodies are broken. **Death reigns because of our sin**. Every other attempted savior failed because they could not address our core problem of our sin. **This is exactly why Jesus had to die. He died to be the ransom payment and pay for our sins**. His death gives us life and fully dealt with our sin.

Romans 5:8-9 NKJV

> (8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

> (9) Much more then, having now been **justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath** through Him.

Jesus died on the cross to deal with our sin problem. He was perfect and lived a holy life, never sinning. **He then accepted death and paid for our sin by offering His blood.** We are justified, declared holy, through the blood of Jesus. He took our wrath and paid His blood so that we would not experience wrath. He is the Savior of the world because He gave His blood to defeat sin and death. We simply believe, in what He did to be saved.

A valid question arises though, what makes Jesus unique from all the other saviors out there. What makes the gospel of Jesus different and true in comparison to all the other gospels? The resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:13-21 ESV

> (13) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.
> (14) And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and **your faith is in vain.**
> (15) We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.
> (16) For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.
> (17) **And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.**
> (18) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
> (19) If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.
> (20) **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead**, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
> (21) For as by a man came death, **by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.**

If Jesus is not risen then our faith is in vain, it is futile and we are still in our sins. If Jesus did not come back to life, then all the dead have perished and there is no life beyond the grave. **Everything hinges on the resurrection of Jesus**. The payment of His blood is proved to be worthy and acceptable because He rose from the grave. He is risen so we have life. He is risen so our sins have been paid for. As a believer **the resurrection of Jesus is not to be an abstract truth** or something that happened close to 2000 years ago and is only talked about at Easter. We are to seek to live in its power each and every day.

Philippians 3:8-11 ESV

> (8) Indeed, **I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things **and count them as rubbish**, in order that I may gain Christ
> (9) and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—
> (10) **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection**, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death,
> (11) **that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.**

Paul counted everything as loss and rubbish in comparison to knowing Jesus. Paul understood that Jesus fully took care of his sins and he was amazed by this. He desperately wanted to know the

power of Jesus' resurrection. Paul wanted to walk in an intimacy and closeness with Jesus **and experience Jesus' resurrected life.**

This means that Jesus is to be the center of our lives. To quote Jim Henderson "**You are only going to live for Christ to the degree you hold fast to His word."** We need to know His word to know Him and to walk in this kind of closeness. We have a resurrected savior that fully paid for our sins. Jesus desires for us to know what the resurrected life in Him looks like. This means knowing Him through the Word and using it as a filter for everything in our life.

This might be a season of exhaustion, and disappointment for you, just like the disciples on Easter Sunday. It might be a season where something you trusted in has failed. It might be a season of joy and peace. No matter where you are in life and what is going on for you right now **we each can turn to our Savior who offers us a resurrected life in Him.**

2 Timothy 1:9-10 NET

> (9) **He is the one who saved us** and called us with a holy calling, not based on our works **but on His own purpose and grace**, granted to us **in Christ Jesus before time began,** (10) but now made visible through the appearing of our **Savior Christ Jesus**. **He has broken the power of death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!**