



river west church

Refusing to Conform

Revelation 13

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The Sunday After Easter – Now What?

Easter week is always a major event in the life of our church. Easter weekend brings us to the radical center of the Christian faith, the death of Christ on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter Sunday. These events cast us into the role of spectators. It is God Himself who took action on our behalf through the death and resurrection of Christ! This is why the word Gospel means “good news.” The Gospel is not “good advice” for improving your life. It is news. It is a record of what God has done for us. It is the glad proclamation of these events; events that have changed our lives and our eternal destiny. No wonder Easter Sunday is such a celebration!

But what happens next? Is there anything else? Yes, as a matter of fact there is. We learned last Sunday that there is one more piece to the story of Easter and it completes the story. Jesus wants to set our hearts on fire with faith, hope, and love. This is the Easter encounter recorded in Luke 24. Cleopas and his buddy began with downcast hearts. They were “checking out” on their faith, so to speak. But Jesus sought them out, drew near to them, awakened their hearts and turned them around. He set their hearts on fire! That’s what Jesus wants to do in each of us.

Why We Open the Bible

In His encounter with the two disciples in Luke 24, Jesus used the bible to set their hearts on fire. Jesus led them in an intense bible study. The bible study was focused on Jesus Himself; especially the central themes of the Gospel, His death and resurrection. As they listened and learned, their hearts came alive!

The story is for us. Jesus is showing us the way forward in our faith. Jesus wants us to follow this same pattern; open the Bible, focus on Jesus and come alive in faith! This is why we open the bible every Sunday at River West Church. We believe God uses the scriptures to bring our hearts alive in faith, hope and love. We study the bible for many reasons, but most of all so that we can see Jesus clearly, put our faith in Him, and learn to follow Him in our daily life.

We study the bible even though parts of it can be very challenging or difficult to understand. Right now we are studying the Book of Revelation. This is a very intense and often confusing part of the bible! But we know that the focus of the book is Jesus Himself (see Revelation 1:1 & 19:10). We know that if we dig deep into God’s word, always focusing on Jesus and the central themes of the Gospel, God will use it to set our hearts on fire with faith in Christ!

Now What?

It’s the Sunday after Easter. So now what? Now we press forward in our faith. Now we learn to walk with Jesus in faith. Now we live with a sense of expectancy, knowing that Jesus is alive and He walks with us. Now we live a life that is centered in Jesus our risen Lord. Now we answer Christ’s call to make a difference in our world.

But we cannot do these things alone. Jesus wants us to join together with other believers to become a true community of Christ. This is why Cleopas and his buddy went back to Jerusalem. They needed to

be with others in the community of faith. Jesus promised that He would empower them to be His witnesses in the world. That means we also have a mission for Christ in our world. It's exciting, but it's also a challenge! We must keep our focus in the right place and grow in our faith. We must support one another as we grow together in our faith and mission.

These are great reasons for us to gather each and every week for worship. And beyond that, we love God for His great work on our behalf through Christ. He is worthy of our worship! It is so great that you have joined us! Let's stay at. Together, we will see Christ, our risen Lord, do amazing things in our lives and in our world.