

# The Easter Effect

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## Introduction

Those of you who are in DSP and are familiar with “The DaVinci Effect” should appreciate the title of this message which I have called, “The Easter Effect.” We can all hope that DaVinci will be to digital video what Easter has been to life itself.

Easter is a special celebration of the resurrection of Christ. This makes it the most important holiday for Christians because our very faith in Christ is based on His resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:14 - if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. (NIV)

We all look forward to eternal life and the resurrection of Christ proves that there is life after death.

If we believe the resurrection of Christ really happened, this should cause us to strive for excellence at work. This is what I’m calling “The Easter Effect” – that accepting the resurrection of Christ as reality should help us to be better at what we do.

## Importance of the Resurrection

The number one thing that the resurrection of Christ screams out to us today is that Jesus of Nazareth is who He claimed to be: the promised Savior who was in fact God Himself. Jesus made such bold assertions about Himself that He was either insane or He really was the Creator of all things who came as a man to make the way for our sins to be forgiven. The resurrection of Jesus confirms that He told us the truth. So if we want to experience the wonderful promise of eternal life that He made to us, we need to follow Him.

## Authority of the Bible

Accepting the fact that the resurrection of Christ really happened is not something that we have to take entirely on our faith. The resurrection of Christ is the most thoroughly documented event of ancient history. There are over 5,600 manuscripts of the New Testament that are copies written within 100 years of the originals. By comparison, only 7 copies of the writings of Plato have been discovered and these were written 1,200 years after the original. More copies of the Bible have been printed than any other book in history. And it has been translated into more languages than any other book in history.

Even without these impressive statistics, the Bible authenticates itself by what it says. Its historical accuracy has consistently been proven by archeological discoveries. Its prophecies foretold details about the coming of Christ that were fulfilled in Jesus. And many other biblical prophecies have been fulfilled regarding the most prominent nations in history. These prophetic fulfillments

confirm that the Bible is inspired by God because only God can “*declare the end from the beginning*” (Isaiah 46:10, NKJV).

All of this tells us that we can trust the truthfulness of the Bible. If God is Almighty enough to have brought about the creation, then He is also Almighty enough to accurately bring us His Word even using people that are prone to being distracted by their own agenda. So this means we can trust the Bible’s testimony that the resurrection of Christ really happened along with the other great truths it contains.

## Wisdom for Work

The mission of the Houston Christian initiative is to help Christian TIers better live out the values and claims of our faith at work. The Bible is where we learn about the values and claims of our faith. It is full of God’s wisdom that may be applied to our lives at work. Our culture has conditioned us to consider our work life to be separate from their spiritual life. But our greatest commandment is to: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*” (Matthew 22:37, NIV). We are not doing this if we exclude God from our work. We spend too much time at work to partition God out of this aspect of our lives.

## Calling

There is a false perception that we are not working for God unless we are working as a pastor, missionary, or in some other full-time church staff position. But God mandated work from the beginning; on the sixth day of creation He told Adam and Eve:

Genesis 1:28 - “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (NIV)

God called us to dedicate ourselves to ruling over His creation before He called anyone to preach. From the beginning, God intended for us to manage His creation for Him as stewards. God Himself worked in bringing about the creation and He intends for us to work with Him in ruling over it.

## Work in a Fallen World

The conventional wisdom is to think of work as drudgery; something we have to do to earn a living. But that is not God’s plan for us. What makes work unpleasant is the consequences of our own disobedience to God which was characterized in Genesis 3:18 as “*thorns and thistles.*” The “*thorns and thistles*” that make farming difficult in an agrarian society manifest themselves today here at TI as silicon bugs, poor yields, reliability failures and any

number of things that conspire to cause us to have to work harder.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Despite the “*thorns and thistles*” of work in this age, we can still experience at least some of the satisfaction that God wants us to have on the job. For example, our work should be an outlet for creative expression. Genesis 1:27 tells us that God created us in His image. God is the Creator and one way we are created in His image is that we have the capacity to be creative. And thus our work should be an outlet for creative expression. I can sense that the Lord is pleased with me when I propose an elegant solution to a delicate customer problem. He cares about these things because it brings order to the world and builds relationships between people.

### **Restoring Order**

Our potential to bring order to the world and build relationships between people makes our work important to the Creator. Bringing order to the world is on God’s agenda because originally the creation was “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31). Order needs to be restored to the world because disorder came as a consequence of mankind disobeying God. So God is certainly pleased when our work does bring order to the world.

### **Building Relationships**

Our God is all about relationships. All interpersonal relationships are important to God especially our relationship to Him. Jesus summed up all the Law in just two commandments: loving God and loving your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39). Our workplace provides a setting where we can practice loving both God and our neighbor. There are many things we can do on the job that serves the interests of our fellow employees and God at the same time. For example, when people know that we are motivated by God in everything we do, we glorify Him when we do a good job...

Matthew 5:16 - let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (NIV)

### **Calling to Excellence**

Knowing that our work is important to God will give us a sense of calling in our work. It makes our work more of a mission than something we have to do for our own livelihood. God has brought all people into existence for specific purposes and so He has given us the necessary skills and arranged for us to work at a job where we can serve His purposes. Being part of something greater than ourselves adds dignity to what we do and provides motivation to excellence on the job.

Those who believe the testimony of the Bible will recognize the value God places on our work and this should motivate us to have an exceptional work ethic...

Colossians 3:23 - Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men (NIV)

We know that there will be a time of judgment when our faithfulness as stewards of God’s creation will be revealed. We might be able to hide sloppy work from our earthly supervisor but God sees all things and ultimately we are accountable to Him. And all who have been blessed by God with eternal life will want to please Him out of gratitude for what He has done for us.

### **Stress**

An even more personal benefit of The Easter Effect is help with the stress of working. Those who know that there is a resurrection to eternal life are better equipped to deal with this stress. Applying the truth of the resurrection to our lives helps us to see our difficulties in light of eternity.

Romans 8:18 - I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (NIV)

No matter how bad things get in this world, they are insignificant in the light of eternity. So adopting an eternal perspective will ease our stress.

Stress is often caused by having to deal with change. And in our fast-paced, high-tech society today, it seems like the pace of change is even on the increase. Applying the truth of the resurrection of Christ to our lives should help us to more effectively and swiftly navigate change here at TI... The Bible tells us that ultimately our Creator is in control so if this is the case, then change must happen for a purpose. God is so powerful that He is actively involved in maintaining the most fundamental forces in the universe...

Colossians 1:17 - He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (NIV)

Certainly people are free to make their own decisions which impacts outcomes for individuals but God is Almighty enough to have His will be done despite allowing all people to exercise their own free will. God being in control helps us deal with stress because...

Romans 8:28 - we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (NKJV)

Knowing that we have eternal life takes the pressure off our living in this world. Those who do not have this hope are driven to pack all they can into their lives because it is coming to an end. Those who believe the testimony of the Bible know that death is not the end, it is the beginning of our eternal existence.

John 5:28-29 - a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. (NIV)

Accepting this truth will bring comfort to those who have an active relationship with Jesus. And this same truth should stir those who don’t really know the Lord as their Savior to yield their lives to Him.

### **Cooperation**

Another benefit of The Easter Effect is to improve cooperation between people. Christians should be better

motivated to build cooperation between people in the workplace than those who neglect the testimony of the Bible. Followers of Jesus respect all people as being made in the image of the Creator. Indeed, we're all related because we have a common ancestor in Adam and Eve. If people are the product of random natural processes as required by the theory of evolution, then we have every right to exclude those we deem inferior to ourselves. Think about it... excluding the inferior is simply an application of "survival of the fittest." The evolutionary worldview essentially promotes an individualistic competitive spirit rather than a team spirit. If God did not create us, there is no purpose to life and no accountability for our attitudes toward others. Thus those who trust the Bible as being God's Word should be more cooperative with their coworkers than those who reject Christ's resurrection and have an evolutionary world view..

### **Retirement?**

Another topic that The Easter Effect helps us to have a correct view of is retirement. The difficult nature of work in this age has most of us looking forward to the day when we can retire from TI. The American dream is to reach a point in life where you can stop working. But no where does the Bible represent this idea as being God's will for us. It may be God's will for us that we'll reach a point where we are no longer working at TI but He wants us to always be doing something useful to others. I believe that the wrong view of retirement has come from a wrong view about heaven. Most people think heaven is God's retirement program. But the Bible tells us in Revelation 5:10 that those who spend eternity with the Lord will reign with Him on the earth. God created a physical universe for us to rule over in our mortal bodies and He will create a new physical universe for us to rule over through eternity in our resurrected bodies. God didn't give us eternal life to spend it on doing nothing; we will have wonderful opportunities to express our creativity through gainful work that is not subject to the "*thorns and thistles*" of work this age. It is hard for us in our current condition to grasp what this will be like but the Bible assures us that it will be glorious.

1 Corinthians 2:9 - No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him (NIV)

### **Image of God**

Earlier, I mentioned our being creative as one of the ways we are created in the image of God. An even more profound aspect of being created in the image of God is that we have a free will to make choices that have eternal ramifications. As God makes choices with results lasting for eternity, our choices also have either eternal blessings or eternal consequences. God gave us a free will so that we may have a true relationship with Him. It is not possible to have a truly satisfying relationship unless both parties are free to accept or reject the other. God loved us so much that He was willing to risk our rejecting Him in order to have a genuine relationship with us.

The problem with our having a free will is that everyone has used it to pursue our own agendas rather than get on board with God's plan. The Bible calls this lack of regard for God sin and it is a problem we all have...

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (NKJV)

The problem with sin is that it separates us from God. We were created for a purpose and sin keeps us from realizing that purpose.

Romans 6:23a - For the wages of sin is death, (NKJV) Fortunately for us, God intervened and made it possible for our sins to be forgiven.

Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NKJV)

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins by giving His own life in our place. He is the only one who could do this because He is the only one who ever lived a sinless life. Jesus lived a sinless life because He wasn't just a man, He was also God. I know that this is a difficult truth to embrace, but God helps those who are truly open to Him to accept it. And He has promised us:

Romans 10:9 - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (NKJV)

### **Conclusion**

This is why the Easter celebration of the resurrection of Christ is so important. Believing the resurrection of Jesus really happened is necessary to have an eternal relationship with the Creator of all things.

It is also important to note that there is nothing we can do to earn eternal life; all we can do is respond to what He has already done for us. This is how true biblical Christianity differs from all the world's religions. The world's religions are all about how to earn eternal life by doing certain things and not doing others. But the Bible makes it clear that eternal life is a gift to all who will simply trust in Christ and make Him Lord of their life.

And having an eternal relationship with the Lord has wonderful benefits in the here and now such as helping us to have the attitude we need to excel in our work.

If you haven't experienced a close personal relationship with the Creator of all things, I'd encourage you to commit yourself to Him today. If you have any questions about any of what I've shared with you today, please talk to me afterwards. Or come to one of our Tuesday Bible studies. Our facilitators always appreciate it when they are not the only one asking questions.