

Easter Eggs Joy is Ours

Jesus died that we might *live* in joy (Hebrews 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:16). This truth shouts to us in some of the unusual, lesser-known details – the Easter eggs – of Jesus' crucifixion. One such Easter egg is that God chose to make the world completely *dark* the last three hours that Jesus was on the cross (Matthew 27:45). In His last moments, Jesus identifies with the darkness we all feel. As He cries out and yields up His spirit, the earth shakes, saints come out of their graves, the curtain in the temple is torn, and instantly *light* returns. That light was the eradication of the effects of sin and darkness. And that last shout or cry of Jesus may have been not a cry of despair or anguish but a shout of joy (Hebrews 12:2). Another Easter egg is the tearing of the veil in the temple (Matthew 27:51). God tore the veil, which separated humans from the presence of God in the most holy place in the temple, so that we could come freely and boldly into His presence (Hebrews 10:19-22). All these things that took place so that we could find the fullness of joy in the presence of God. Jesus did not die that we would have moments of joy but live daily in joy (1 Thessalonians 5:16). We experience that joy and keep it active in our lives as we pray continually and give thanks in His presence (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24).

GET THINGS STARTED

What is one of the greatest moments of joy you have personally experienced? What was the situation, and what gave you that joy? Do you believe that we can continually live in joy versus only experiencing periodic moments of joy? Why or why not?

GO DEEPER

1. From Matthew 27:45, the last three hours of Jesus' life were in darkness at an unusual time of day. Why would God cause such darkness? What might be significant about Jesus crying out in that darkness, quoting Psalm 22 (Matthew 27:46) and light returning as Jesus gave up His spirit?
2. According to Hebrews 10:19-22, why is the tearing of the temple veil so powerful? What should be our response to what the torn veil accomplished for us?
3. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16, we are instructed to be joyful always. What does it look like to *live* continually in joy versus having mere moments of joy? How do we have joy even when we are facing difficulties and struggles?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Are you living daily in joy? Why or why not? What needs to change internally and externally for you to experience joy regularly versus momentarily? How do you become a person characterized by joy?

PRACTICE IT NOW

As a group, take time to pray together for the reality of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection to produce immeasurable joy in you. Ask God to allow you to fully embrace mentally, emotionally, and spiritually the magnitude of the cross and all that was accomplished through Jesus there. Worship Him because of the access we have to His presence now, that we can approach His throne of grace with confidence (Heb 4:16).

Scan this QR code and tell us what your group
is doing for We Love Our City Week!

