

***Easter Is Your Starting Line!
Your Race Counts! Pt.1
Hebrews 12:1-3, John 20:3-8
April 19 & 20, 2025***

Hebrews 12:1, *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

John 20:3, *So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.*

Easter Brings Hope to Those Who Are Empty

E – EYEWITNESSES Saw Him

Luke 24:36, *While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."*

1 Corinthians 15:3, *... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me...*

M – MARTYRS Died for Him

Acts 5:29, *... "We must obey God rather than human beings!"*

2 Peter 1:16, *For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

P – PUBLIC Testimony Spread Quickly

Acts 2:22, *"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.*

Acts 2:32, *God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.*

John 20:24, *Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see*

the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” **26** A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **27** Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” **28** Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” **29** Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

T – TOMB Was Empty

Matthew 28:6, He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.

Matthew 28:12, When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, **13** telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ **14** If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”

John 20:6, Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, **7** as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.

Y – YOUR Race Counts

1 Corinthians 9:24, Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Acts 9:3, As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. **4** He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” **5** “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. **6** “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”