



CONTACT
From Forest Baptist Church

EASTER 2022

He really died



He really rose

HE REALLY DIED HE REALLY ROSE

by Brad Franklin

Three years ago, Megan Franklin became suddenly unwell and passed away. Only in her thirties, Megan left behind a husband - Brad - and seven children, the youngest of whom was born just shortly before she died. Here, Brad reflects upon how faith in Jesus Christ helped them with the shock and loss which they experienced during those painful days.

Jesus is alive. He really died, and, yes, he really rose again. This changes everything. For most people (even Christians) this seems like a distant idea. We may affirm it, but we, mostly, think of it as something that happened 2000 years ago. We're glad Jesus walked out of the tomb (especially as it means lots of chocolate eggs and a school holiday at Easter time), but what direct relevance does it have to my life? What relevance does it have when tragedy strikes our dear wife, mother, sister, daughter and friend dies suddenly? As 2018 gave way to 2019 and my wife, Megan's, health deteriorated, the resurrection's significance for my family and I became clear. The resurrection of Jesus gave us real, abiding hope. The resurrection changes everything.

The Apostle Paul describes Christians as those who "... Don't grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). The point's simple: Christians grieve differently than

everybody else. As a minister, I've taken enough funerals to see this first hand. There's a difference between Christian grieving and the grieving of non-believers. Oh, both grieve, but for the Christian, below the sadness and the pain, there's something else too. For much of the world, there's merely loss and unanswered questions. Christians have that too, but they have something more. They have hope - a confidence about the future and the life to come. Why do Christians have this hope? Paul, again, explains: "...For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him... For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (v14,16).

Christians are hopeful, because Jesus himself (the eternal Son of God who became a man) died, and three days later, he rose again. Due to human rebellion against God, death is a universal certainty. It's our just wages for our disobedient lifestyle. And it appears permanent. Nobody has come back from the dead and stayed alive, have they? Jesus did. He's still at it right now. And he will come back again. On that day, as Paul says, those who died trusting in Jesus will rise again.

I could look at her failing body ravaged by infection, and I knew, like Jesus and because of Jesus, Megan would rise again.

Jesus' resurrection ensures his return and the raising of all those who've 'died awaiting the promise.' It will happen. We can count on it. This changes how we view and respond to death.

Megan had contracted a bacterial infection that led to catastrophic brain damage. She was unconscious on the critical care ward for a week, and we waited. As Megan's life here on this earth seemed to be fading, Jesus' invincible life took on fresh, personal significance. The children and I, our family and friends were devastated. We had a lot of unanswered questions: How could this happen to Megan? And so quickly? How could I and the 7 children possibly carry on without her? What would it be like to never taste her homemade cinnamon buns again? These questions (some sober and some silly) just scratch the surface.

But amidst all these unanswered questions, we had firm and sure answers to the questions that mattered most: do sin and death ultimately win? Is there any life beyond the grave? The answers (because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ) are: "no" and "yes." Death is heart breaking. Yet, Jesus is alive. We do lose, but not forever. Sin and death seem to have the final say on critical care wards, but they don't. For His people, Jesus purchased the forgiveness of sin by his sacrificial death. And to those who trust in Jesus, he imparts his forever-resilient life. We knew with certainty at Megan's bedside: as surely as Jesus rose, Megan would rise again. I could look at her failing body ravaged by infection, and I knew, like Jesus and because of Jesus, Megan would rise again one day.

Of course, this certain hope doesn't negate the pain. It didn't for me, our family or our church. Death's sting has been ultimately removed by Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:55), but it still packs quite a punch. Jesus himself experienced this. He knew he would raise a man named Lazarus from the dead only moments later, yet he wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:35). The pain remains, but it is tempered with a glorious hope.

Do you have this same hope? Do you face death with any sort of certainty or hope? Our story may seem not to have a happy ending. After a week on the critical care ward, Megan died. But Jesus' resurrection changes the ending to Megan's story. She will live again. Will you trust in Jesus? Will you, in the same way, live again?

Brad Franklin is the minister of St Giles Christian Mission, Islington sgcm.co.uk

Easter Talk 2022

Thursday 14th April
7.15pm

Come and hear Brad talk in person about facing the death of a loved one.

(Zoom link also available)



Easter Services 2022

Sunday 17th April
10.30am & 5.00pm

Join us this Easter to hear the wonderful message of Jesus.

The morning service can also be watched on our YouTube channel



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📺 forestbaptist.org.uk/youtube

You can reach our minister, David Last, using the details above.



Sunday Services

Morning : 10.30am

Evening : 5.00pm

Learn English

Free Saturday classes, 10am-12pm

Beginners and intermediates

Contact Ferris: 07727 082 449

forestbaptist.org.uk/esol



Children's Club

Fridays from 3.30pm to 5.00pm, for ages 5-11

Includes Christian stories and teaching from the Bible

Organised by Child Evangelism Fellowship

Contact Pauline on 07895 112 915



Forest Baptist uses the Welsh Chapel on the High Road in Leytonstone, halfway between McDonald's and the Green Man Roundabout. Buses 66, 145, 257, W13, W14 and W19 all stop outside. The Tube station is just over half a kilometre away. A few car parking spaces are available on the site. Some of our activities occur in other locations. Please get in touch to find out times and places.

