**North Christian Church**

**~ In 2020, Looking to See a Perfect Vision of God’s Perfect Plan ~**

***“Where there is no vision, the people perish…”* - Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)**

**April: *Seeing the Perfect Plan of God – Part 3 Just Seeing Jesus!***

***“But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”* - Mark 16:7**

**Today: Just Seeing Jesus – The Importance of Eyewitnesses**

***“*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.*” –* II Peter 1:16**

 **“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilledamong us, 2just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.” – Luke 1: 1-2**

**“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” - I John 1: 1-3**

**“Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.” – Luke 10: 23**

**Jesus came to live among us, to be on our level, teach, heal, and to personally bring in the Kingdom of God. He also came to serve, suffer, and die on the cross for our sins. That was the hard part. Then…we know that He also came to overcome sin and conquer death. That is the glorious part. And when He did all of this…He intended to be seen, He purposefully wanted to be noticed…for people to recognize and realize who He was and what He was doing. Of course, we see clearer now that they did when Jesus walked on earth; but His life was lived out in the open, on display, on the world stage for all to see Him, and for all to believe in Him as their Savior and Lord! So today…we are seeing Jesus, living out His mission and purpose in one of the most significant weeks in all of history…Holy Week…the Passion Week of Christ. Today…we are seeing the greatest event in all of history…Jesus coming back from the dead! We see Him coming out of the grave and conquering death; and, in doing so, proclaiming to everyone who believes in Him, not just the hope but the assurance of eternal life. Jesus’ resurrection is real. There were several eyewitnesses to the fact. Today, we are looking at these eyewitnesses.**

**There will be six eyewitness observations in the message today on this Easter Sunday…**

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1. **First Eyewitness account. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Matthew 28: 1-10; John 20: 11-18; John 20:18-25**

1. **Eyewitness news at the scene! News people always try to be the first on the scene to get the scoop of the story. Mary was the first to arrive at the greatest scene in history.**

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1. **Jesus communicates with Mary…interpersonally. How do we know? He calls her by her name.**

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1. **He calls to us when we are in the same state as Mary: Where are we in our relationship with the Risen Lord?**

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1. **Second eyewitness account. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Cleopas and friend) walking on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Luke 24:13-34; Mark 16: 11-14**

1. **They were on the road…traveling…to another town. These were not a part of Jesus’ inner-circle of disciples. Jesus is to be shared with everyone everywhere!**

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1. **Jesus is right there with them, but they can’t see beyond their “ain’t it awful” attitudes! Jesus is there…giving them hope. Us, too! Prophecies are being fulfilled, but Jesus’ presence is always with us!**

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1. **Jesus is walking and talking with us, too. Giving us light, giving us hope, giving us His promised presence- every step of the way. Victory in Jesus!**

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1. **Third eyewitness account. The ten \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ plus \_\_\_\_\_…in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Luke 24: 36-44; John 20:19-29**

1. **He appeared to them to give them peace and reassurance. The first words out of His mouth…peace!**

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1. **He appeared to them to give them the proof of His resurrection.**

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1. **Jesus appears to give them a preview of their purpose.**

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1. **Fourth Eyewitness is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the Sea of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**John 21: 1- 14**

1. **Jesus appeared to Peter to show Him grace, give him forgiveness, and to reconcile and restore their relationship.**

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1. **Jesus also reveals to Simon Peter God’s will for his life...his “what now”? Jesus tells him to lead and feed His people.**

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1. **The key to this eyewitness of Jesus, is that Peter jumped. He jumped to get to Jesus, undeterred. Hopefully, they will be better, because we are better! And…we will be better if, and only if, we jump out of our old familiar lives and come to Jesus for a new life! Ready, set, jump! Jesus is waiting, and it’s going to be awesome!**

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1. **Our Fifth Eyewitness is over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ over a period of \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Acts 1: 3-8; I Corinthians 15: 3-8**

1. **It’s hard to argue with large numbers. The truth has to be tested and tested many times in different settings. One sighting of Jesus would not be enough for the skeptics, and Jesus knew that. The more something is tested, the more it becomes legitimate and effective. Now, the resurrected Jesus appeared to over 500 people. This is a significant number of tests to prove that He was alive. And, He did that for 40 days.**

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1. **The truth takes time, too. Once or twice is not enough time to give for facts. Josh McDowell brings this out in his book, Evidence that Demands a Verdict. It takes time to allow the truth to prevail. Forty days is a good testing time. Jesus appeared over forty days! Jesus is alive, World!**

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1. **Jesus IS alive. He IS Risen. That’s not just hearsay. If you ever go to court to prove something, you’d better not just have hearsay. You must have facts…AND witnesses.**

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1. **Sixth Eyewitness are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the New \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_…being an eyewitness of the risen Jesus is one of the credentials that made you an Apostle in the first century church.**

**Acts 9:4 – 6; I Corinthians 15:3-8**

1. **Jesus appears to James, His brother, who would become the leading Apostle of the Jerusalem Church. James died for his faith in Jesus. Would he have died for something that he knew wasn’t true? Of course not! He died for believing in the risen Jesus, because He saw Jesus risen!**

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1. **Next, Jesus appears to Saul on the road to Damascus. Saul would become the great Apostle Paul who is the Architect of the Christian faith, and the first missionary of the Gospel to the Gentile world, not to mention that he wrote half of the New Testament. Great leaders who saw the risen Lord!**

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1. **Jesus is still appearing today in the world through His Word, His Church, prayer, and through His people. Also, in the Mysterious surprises of life.**

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1. **In closing…We have seen Jesus this week…and His Eyewitnesses. But they have all gone to heaven. That leaves us…we are the new I witnesses. Not eye E-Y-E, but I…first person pronoun…I. And, together we are His I – witnesses in the world. Are you a witness for Jesus today?**

**Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; Hebrews 12:1-2; Acts 2:32; Revelation 12:11**

1. **Are we like the eyewitness of Jesus in the Bible? No…they have already gone to heaven and become that great cloud-crowd of witnesses. We recognize them today and thank God for them. They carried the message to us.**

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1. **Now, we are the new I - witnesses. When it comes to the risen Lord Jesus, each one of us must say today, “I witness…I witness for Him and about Him!” – Does anybody testify that Jesus is Lord today? Like the old preachers used to say…Can I get a witness? Today, we say – Yes, I witness to that fact! Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed!**

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1. **The last point is the most important. The only way we can testify and witness for Jesus and about Jesus today is to know Jesus. Do you know Jesus? To start knowing Him, all you have to do is believe that He died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead for your eternal life. Believe that He did that, and then open the door to your heart and let Him come in to be your Savior, Lord, and Friend. Then you can really say…I believe in Jesus, I know Jesus, and from now - I witness for Jesus! If you say that this morning, then we can all say on this Easter Sunday morning - Praise the Lord! We are the new I witnesses for Jesus.**

**Let’s go be I - witnesses for Him in the world this week, this month, and until He comes again…which could be any day.**

1. **Last, we will triumph, Revelation 12 tells us, by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony! That means, because of The Lamb of God and our witness for Him, we have the Victory today! Amen!**

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