

## Easter 2023

*The story begins with a dead end. At one point or another, we all face dead ends. We get stuck. We feel trapped. We hit rock bottom. From what we see there's no way out. Then Jesus enters the story. And that's when the story that started with a dead end becomes a story about death not being the end. Jesus shows us a way forward. He is the way forward.*

**Easter: Come to Life**

1. Rick began by pointing out that *Easter is not just a truth to believe; Easter is a power to receive*. Why is that distinction so important? Follow up: **Read Mark 5:1-20**. How does this story encourage or challenge you in your present circumstances?
2. **WHY A CEMETERY? Jesus did not run from death; he ran to it.** How does it make you feel to know that Jesus went toward people and places many would run from (**Mark 15:1-3**)? Follow up: **Jesus does not just offer life after death, but life instead of death.** How does knowing this bring you encouragement today and in the future (**see John 11:25-26**)?
3. **WHERE IS HOPE? Jesus can redeem our past.** *The past can make a good classroom, but it makes a terrible prison.* When have been tempted to see your primary identity through the lens of your past mistakes or wounds? Follow up: How have you experienced Jesus redeeming your past & releasing you from it so you can live (**see 2 Corinthians 5:17**)?
4. **WHERE IS HOPE? Jesus can revive our strength.** *The man in Mark 5 could break chains, but he didn't have the strength to break free of his bondage.* What are some of the ways we still try to numb our pain? Share some other examples of when Jesus provided hope for people. What are some ways Jesus has revived your strength (**see Romans 6:4 & 8:11**)?
5. **WHERE IS HOPE? Jesus can renew our minds.** *Freedom will always be a challenge until we challenge how we think about it.* **Read Romans 12:2.** How has God helped you renew your mind in your faith journey? Follow up: What are some practical things you can do daily to renew your mind?
6. **WHERE IS HOPE? Jesus can deliver us from evil.** *When Jesus confronts evil powers, evil powers always get an eviction notice* (**see 1 John 3:8**). Share some examples of how Jesus has delivered you from evil. How did that change the way you now live?
7. **WHAT IS EASTER? Jesus went toward death so that we could come to life.** Rick closed by asking this question, *"What cemetery have you been living in?"* How would you respond to that question? Follow up: What is your next step in light of this message?

---

PS: As you close, spend some time praying for and talking about the **Let's Talk About Mental Health** series Rick will begin next week. Learn more about it here: [thehills.org/mental-health](https://thehills.org/mental-health)

