

DEEP SIX STUDY

April 5th, 2026

Easter Sunday – “Divine Encounters with Jesus”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS *(You can view the full message online at capecodchurch.com)*

Summary: They say you should never meet your heroes, because invariably you'll be disappointed if you do – it's hard for a hero to live up to expectations. That seemed true for Jesus, as well – most of the people who had followed him and hung on his every word and been amazed by his miracles were grossly disappointed in him at the end of his life. They betrayed, denied, and abandoned him at the cross, but then something happened: a *divine encounter* that changed everything.

1. The Cross and Divine Disappointment (John 19:16-19; 1 Corinthians 1:23^{NIV})

- There was no worse way to be executed in Jesus' time than by crucifixion. The Romans designed it not just to kill, but to torture and humiliate – not just to end a life, but to end a story. It was, as Paul put it, “scandalous” to be killed that way – certainly not the way a savior could possibly die. It was not the way the story of Jesus was supposed to end, so most of his followers gave up on him.
- The crucifixion was scandalous, and for Jesus' disciples it was deeply disappointing as well. We all know what it feels like to be disappointed in something – and many of us have had that same feeling about God. We've “given up” on God because things didn't turn out the way we expected them to in our work, our marriages, or in our lives as a whole. But perhaps, like Jesus' disciples, we're disappointed because we haven't yet seen the whole story...

2. The Empty Tomb was a Divine Encounter (John 20:1-9; Revelation 3:20)

- As John tells the rest of the story, he and Peter ran to Jesus' tomb on Easter morning to see if what the women said was true: that the tomb was empty and Jesus had risen from the dead. When they got there and looked inside and saw the grave clothes neatly folded, they finally believed.
- For John, all of the disappointment he felt when he saw his friend and rabbi and savior die on the cross was gone, and he now believed everything Jesus had said about himself. He believed that Jesus had come to bring him real, abundant life. He believed that Jesus could, once and for all, forgive his sins. And he believed that Jesus was, indeed, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”
- Like his first followers, we *all* need an encounter with the risen Jesus – a divine encounter. And encounter where we go from knowing *about* Jesus to knowing him personally. We may not have an empty tomb to “encounter,” but he is still there for us. We have the written testimonies of those who saw him alive. We have 2000 years of the testimonies of those who have encountered his living Spirit personally – and we have access to that same Spirit ourselves today.
- It's easy to think that we have to “paint a perfect picture” with our lives – to get our act together and clean up our messes – before we can have our divine encounter with Jesus. But we get it wrong, because *he's* the perfect picture, the perfect representation of God, and he doesn't need us to live up to that. He just needs us to trust him – to trust that he died and rose again to overcome our sin and imperfections and “messes.” He “stands at the door and knocks” – waiting for an encounter with us; we just have to say “yes.”

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.

Psalms 16:8-11; Isaiah 53; John 11:25-26; Acts 2:22-28; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:20

Video of the Week: [John 13-21](#) by Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. When have you felt disappointed by God – a place where the story seemed to end wrong, or where he didn't show up the way you expected him to? What did that season in your life feel like?
2. In 1 Corinthians 1:23, Paul calls the cross "a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles." What is it about the cross that still makes it "offensive" and hard to believe today?
3. Read John 20:8-9 again. John writes that they "saw and believed," even though they didn't fully understand the Scriptures that told them Jesus would rise from the dead. In your view, how is it possible to believe something you don't fully understand?
4. The message pointed out an important distinction: the difference between knowing *about* Jesus and knowing (encountering) him. What does that difference mean to you?
5. How, exactly, does someone go from one to the other – from knowing about Jesus to encountering and "knowing him" personally?
6. What's one practical step you could take this week to know Jesus better – to encounter him in a way that is deeper and richer than you may have encountered him before?