



STUDY GUIDE: April 5, 2026

Message Series: Final Week
Message Title: Our Present Savior
Teaching Pastor: Brian Hughes

Warm-up/Icebreaker: (10 min.)

What's one Easter tradition you grew up with—or still enjoy today?

Pray:

Dear Lord, thank You for the resurrection of Jesus and the hope it brings to our lives today. Help us move beyond simply knowing the story of Easter to experiencing its power personally. Open our hearts to Your peace, Your purpose, and Your presence as we study Your Word together. Teach us what it means to truly live as people shaped by the resurrection. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Get Started: (30 min.)

Read Mark 7:8.

“You have forsaken the commands of God in favor of your own traditions.” I read that this week and thought, ‘Have we done that around Easter?’... Have our traditions forsaken, clouded, hidden, or overshadowed the unbelievable reality of this day. It’s more than possible. I think it’s likely. But we can reclaim Easter today... Why does Easter actually matter? Not culturally. Not traditionally. Not even religiously - meaning all of the religious ritual that we put around Easter. But personally. The question I’m asking is ‘Why does Easter actually matter to you?’” -Pastor Brian Hughes

- How can Easter traditions (church attendance, phrases like “He is risen,” family meals, events) either point us toward Jesus or accidentally replace the meaning of the resurrection?

Read Romans 5:1 & Colossians 1:19–20.

- What does it mean to be “made right with God,” and how does that connect to peace? And how does it help you answer the question, “Why does Easter actually matter to me”?
- Many people believe Jesus rose from the dead—but fewer people live like it changed their lives. Where do you think the difference is between believing something is true and letting it shape how you live?

“The peace Jesus offers is not circumstantial. It’s relational. It’s why Jesus didn’t send a letter or an email from heaven. No, he showed up. Because The peace of God is always born of a relationship with God. A relationship with the living God, who rose from the dead. The peace of God is part of why Easter matters so much. It comes from being made right with God through the power of God demonstrated on this day. Some of us, if we’re honest, your life looks good on the outside...but there’s no peace on the inside. Easter’s refrain is that Peace is available. Not because you’ve earned it. But because Jesus paid for it.” -Pastor Brian Hughes

Reflect and Commit: (40 min.)

Read John 20:1–22.

- Jesus' first words after the resurrection were: *"Peace be with you."* Why do you think peace—not correction, instruction, or celebration—was His first message? And where do people most often try to find peace apart from God?
- *John 20:21-22....Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. How does knowing you are "sent" change the way you think about everyday life?*

"Disciple means follower. If you really believe in the resurrection, if you claim that Easter is more than tradition for you, then your life purpose is grounded in being sent to go and help others become followers too. You do this by putting your life on display and letting people see the change that has happened in you. By letting them see your devotion to God, not in some pious, 'I'm better than you' kind of way but because you just love God that much. By letting others see your new choices informed by your devotion to God and letting them see the way you have been altered on the inside. And sometimes talking about those things. And this is why church matters so much. Because The church is the vehicle of that mission God gave to his followers. We're more effective together."
-Pastor Brian Hughes

- What is one change Jesus has made in your life that others could actually see?
- When you hear that a disciple is someone who helps others follow Jesus, what reaction do you have?
- Why do you think Jesus designed the church to be the primary vehicle for helping people become followers of Him?
- Who is one person in your life right now that God may be inviting you to influence toward Jesus—and what could be your next step with them?

Read John 14:16–17 & Romans 8:11.

- What does it mean practically that God is not only *for* you but *with* you and *in* you?
- Which of these do you most need right now and why?
God's peace
God's purpose
God's presence

"Because of Easter, We don't serve a distant Savior. We live with a present one. And that means you're not alone, and you never have to guess, and you don't have to figure life out on your own...God is not just for you. He is with you. And He is in you. Easter means that we have God's peace. It means we have God's purpose. And most importantly, it means we have God's presence." -Pastor Brian Hughes

Gather prayer requests. (5-10 min.)

Pray:

King Jesus, thank You for stepping into fear-filled rooms and speaking peace over Your followers—and over us today. Help us receive the peace You offer, live out the purpose You've given us, and walk daily in the presence of Your Spirit. Let the truth of the resurrection shape how we think, love, serve, and live this week. Transform our faith from something we believe into something we live. It's in the powerful name of Jesus that we pray, Amen.