# **LifeGroup**

Date: April 23, 2023

Text: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-23 Theme: Reanimated...for holy living

#### **Belong**

“Lake Vida lies in Victoria Valley on the continent of Antarctica. It is isolated under year-round ice cover, and it came to public attention when microbes frozen in its ice cover for more than 2,800 years were successfully thawed and reanimated”*(Wikipedia).*

Reanimation; what seems dead can come back to life. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have the ultimate “reanimation.” Post-Easter living explores the power and promise of Jesus Christ to “reanimate” all of life. If a 2,800 year old microbe can reanimate after being placed in a nutrient rich environment, so can our life reanimate when we’re surrounded by an Easter community of people who love God, love one another, and love their neighbor. In the book of Acts we’ll discover the people of the first church powerfully reanimated for post-Easter living.

* *In your group, share your name and something you’ve seen reanimate (take on a new life).*
* *Talk about your favorite thing to plant, garden, or grow.*

**Prayer...**

Father God, you are the giver of all life. You are the one who is able to breathe new life into places where there has only been death and despair. Transform us by the power of your Holy Spirit. Allow the seeds of faith you’ve given us to grow and flourish so that we can be part of the work you are already doing in Jesus’ name. Amen!

**Belong**

There’s a remarkable power of life in a seed. It’s so tiny. So simple. So unremarkable. And yet, when you plant a little cucumber seed in the ground, without any effort on your part it will transform and grow into a vine that would bear dozens and dozens of cucumbers. All of that power, all of that life, in one tiny seed.

We’re in a worship series entitled, “Reanimation: Post-Easter Liv ing.” We’re talking about what it means to live out daily the new life that is ours through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In our scripture text today Peter refers to this new life. He says, *“You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23).*

#### **Believe**

Read 1 Peter 1:17-23. Peter goes on to tell us that this new life,

this reanimation, this being born anew, is “not of perishable but imperishable seed.” What an interesting phrase. What does it mean? Peter is telling us that our new life in Christ doesn’t come through human means but through God, and that this new life will never end. It will never perish. But Peter’s seed image implies much more. It bears incredibly good news for people who long to be all that God created them to be.

* *Talk about something new that’s growing in your faith life.*
* *How do you believe this growth happens? Where does it come from? How do you know it’s real?*

As surely as a cucumber seed will grow into a cucumber vine we, who have been born anew by the seed of Christ, will grow into the likeness of Christ. Like St. Paul we can be confident that *“…the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”*

Our spiritual growth is God’s business. We don’t make ourselves grow in Christ. It just happens when we yield our lives to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It isn’t up to our effort any more than a cucumber seed struggles to become a cucumber vine.

The Good News is that we are saved by grace and it is by grace that we grow into the likeness of Christ. Our job is to yield to the power of God; it is the Holy Spirit’s job to transform

* *What do you need transformed in your life that only God can do?*

Jesus once taught that if we stay connected to him, if we draw our life from him just as branches draw life from the vine, our lives will bear fruit. And the fruit of a life that is connected to Jesus is “genuine love.” That’s what Peter calls it in verse 22.

* *How is love connected to the transforming that happens in your life?*

It’s just a seed. It’s so small. So simple. So unremarkable. Inside of you there is the seed of imperishable life that dwells in you through faith. Dare to believe that out of the dust of your life God can bear the remarkable fruit of genuine love, a love that changes lives.

#### **Become**

This week, consider your acts of love as seeds of faith you are planting in the life of someone else. You may never see them grow; but you may.

This week, cultivate transformational habits that make your heart and life more receptive to what God is already doing.

**Prayer...**

By the power of your Holy Spirit, come and stir the soil of our hearts so that we can be those who grow in love for you and one another. Come and break through the hardened places of our life. Warm us with your love and light so that new life begins to grow. Amen!

 **Devotions: Daily Walk on the Rock.**

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**Day 1: Monday —Redeemed at Great Cost**

Meditate on 1 Peter 1:17-23. Notice that Jesus is destined to be Redeemer even before he is Creator *(John 1:1-3; 1 Peter 1:20)*. Ponder the great cost of our redemption *(1:18-20)*. Salvation is a gift that we must not squander, for we are saved for God’s purposes and glory. Read John 17:20-26; Ephesians 2:8-10; and 1 Peter 1:13-16,22-23. Use Charles Wesley’s lyrics as your prayer of praise: “Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down …Jesus…pure, unbounded love Thou art; visit us with Thy salvation; enter every trembling heart…Finish, then, Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be…changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place…”

**Day 2: Tuesday —Saved from Sin for God’s Purposes**

Do we ever act as if salvation is a gift without cost? Are we grateful? How do we respond to such incomprehensible love *(Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 John 4:9-10)*? Paul tells the Ephesians to “find out what pleases the Lord” *(5:10)*. Pray you will gain insight into what is pleasing to the Lord as you read Acts 2:14a,36-42 and 1 Peter 1:14-25. Consider recording what you have learned. In Christ, we are made new *(2 Corinthians 5:17)*; in Romans 6, we discover some dimensions of what it means to be “reanimated, in Christ, for holy living.” Ponder all this as you pray.

**Day 3: Wednesday —What Does it Mean to Be Righteous or Holy?**

If we are honest with ourselves, we know that we are not righteous or holy. We fall short of reflecting the love, compassion, grace, forgiveness, and generosity of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. We don’t love God or others as we ought, yet Scripture exhorts us to be holy and even calls us holy *(Ephesians 1:4-9; 1 Peter 1:16; 2:9-10)*. What does this mean? We are righteous only because Jesus is our righteousness *(2 Corinthians 5:21)*, and we are holy in the sense that we are set apart for God’s purposes. Allow 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12 to edify you and guide your prayer.

**Day 4: Thursday—Strangers or Exiles Living in Reverent Fear**

What does Peter mean when he tells us to live in reverent fear *(1 Peter 1:17)*? Jesus calls us “friends” *(John 15:15)*, yet we also know he is mighty Lord and eternal God *(John 20:28; Acts 2:36; Philip- pians 2:9-11; Revelation 1:5-18)*. And how does the exhortation to live as strangers or exiles *(1 Peter 1:17)* relate to our call to be holy or set apart for God’s purposes and glory? We are in the world,

but we are not of the world; we are to love people but are not to embrace the world’s values and adore the world’s treasures. Read John 15:18-21; 17:13-18; 1 Peter 4:8-11; and 1 John 2:15-17; 3:1-3,23-24; 4:19-21. Open your hands and your heart as you offer yourself to Jesus in prayer.

**Day 5: Friday - Jesus is Lord**

Peter refers to Jesus as “Lord and Christ” *(Acts 2:36)*; Christ (Greek) or Messiah (Hebrew) means Anointed One, and the title points to Jesus as Redeemer/Deliverer. But what does the title “Lord” mean? Consider that it means master or sovereign. If Jesus is truly our Lord, how must we live our lives and focus our priorities? A disciple follows, obeys, and emulates his/her master. Do all who call themselves Christians live as disciples? Read Acts 2:36-42 and 1 Peter 1:13-25, noticing what is taught or inferred about those who call Jesus, “Lord,” and are true disciples. Also notice how Peter identifies himself in 2 Peter 1:1. Pray that, with joy, you will live as a servant/slave of Jesus.

**Day 6: Saturday—Reanimated by the Spirit for Holy Living**

Does living the Christian life sometimes seem like a “to do” list? Consider instead that living the Christian life is living in joyful, faithful fellowship with Jesus, the One who loves us beyond measure, the One we follow because of love, not duty. Does this sound even more daunting than following rules? Consider that we live the Christian life reanimated and empowered by the Spirit, and that makes all the difference. Read Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-23,25; Hebrews 10:14-16; 2 Peter 1:3; and 1 John 4:7-13. Did you notice that God’s love flows into our hearts and then flows from us to others? Tell Jesus you yield to his love and long to be filled with his Spirit.

**Day 7: Sunday —You Alone Are My Heart’s Desire**

Meditate on Psalm 42:1-2; 63:1-8; Acts 2:36-42; Philippians 3:7-10a; and 1 Peter 1:23-25. Pray: Jesus, through your Spirit, please transform me and continue to mold me, so that you are my greatest desire and fondest delight. I don’t want to simply call you, “Lord,” I want to live with you on the throne of my life. I want to love you with all my heart and soul; I want you to be my joy, my strength, my song; I want to value what you value, love as you love, serve as you serve, and I want to be grieved by the same things that break your heart of compassion. I want to live a holy life, pouring myself out as your bondservant, a life set apart for your purposes and your glory. Lord, let it be so. Amen.