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## What's so important about Jesus' dying and rising from the dead?



"I don't want to die. I want to live."

A man I had known for about 25 minutes said these words to me as we were flying over the Caribbean Sea between Puerto Rico and Antigua. We were in the middle of a horrific lightning storm. Ten seconds before he said this, our airplane had lost all power and began to dip rather suddenly towards the deep blue expanse of water beneath us. Thankfully, the airplane regained power after only a few agonizing seconds, and we quickly climbed back to our cruising altitude.

"Death scares me," he went on, "because I know nothing about it. I only know how to live."

Choosing between something you know nothing about and something you know quite a bit about is a pretty easy decision. Most everyone feels more confident with what they are familiar. That's why this gentleman was not the first person to express himself in this way. He most certainly will not be

the last. Who can feel more confident about dying than living since we only know about life and not death?

Jesus had never died either. But as he hung on his cross, he knew it was coming. In fact, he had told his followers the day before that "it was for this reason (dying) that he came to this hour" (John 12:27).

Jesus chose death, and he did so with you in mind. Jesus chose death to prove to you that those who follow him have no reason to be afraid of death.

If the pilot of our airplane had guaranteed the passengers before that flight that we would land safely, that he had flown through worse storms and made it, that the back-up generators on the plane would keep any power outage from harming us, we would have been much more confident despite the storm.

Jesus makes a much greater guarantee when he tells us we don't have to be afraid of death. And he proved it by living – after he died. The dead body of Jesus was placed in a grave on Friday evening, but he rose from the dead three days later.

When you follow Jesus, death's scare is taken away. The living Jesus gives you the confidence that your grave will be empty, just like his was. He tells all his disciples, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19).

Jesus' death and resurrection is important because it guarantees for his believers that they too will rise from the dead and live forever!