

# Essential Christianity

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. My name's Chris, for those of you who don't know me. Happy New Year. Good, let's hope it improves from that.

I think, like most men, I have a habit of forgetting things. Wallets, keys, visas, like you name it, I have lost it. You can ask my wife afterwards, she'll give you the list.

And I think one of wives' most significant roles in a marriage is to remind their husbands of things that they have forgotten. She'll say things to me like, how many times do I have to tell you that the washing up brush does not go in the sink?

And I normally reply at that point, probably a few hundred. And I'm not joking. Because at the beginning of a new year, we need to be reminded of things because we forget if you're anything like me.

And we're coming back to the book of 1 Corinthians. And we're going to remind ourselves of some of the essentials of what it means to be a church, what it means to be Christians.

[ 1 : 22 ] And in fact, we're going to look at one chapter for the next four weeks. It's the longest chapter that Paul wrote, even though he didn't write chapters, but it's the longest chapter we have.

And it's one of the most significant chapters in the whole of the New Testament. And we need to really get this because the church of Corinth, if you remember back way again, kind of a few months ago, if you were here, they were a church which had got sidetracked.

They'd been focusing on secondary issues and they'd forgotten what the main thing that they were supposed to be about. They was. So they had forgotten what real spirituality was.

And they were focusing on things like who the best leaders were. They were focusing on who'd got the best gifts. They were focusing on questions of sexuality and all kinds of things, eating food.

And they'd forgotten that there was something which was more important than all of these, which tied all of these things together. And Paul starts off this chapter saying to the Christians, I want to remind you of the main thing.

[ 2 : 26 ] And the main thing is the gospel. It's right up here. Okay? Because as a church, we also want it to be the main thing. And so he says in verse 1, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you.

And what he's saying is, it doesn't matter how long or short you've been a Christian, there's a past, present, and future reality to the Christian life. The Christian life isn't just a decision you made 20 years ago.

It's an ongoing journey of walking with Christ. And he's saying, if you want to get to the checkered flag, if you want to get through to the finishing line without your engine dying, without your wheels falling off your spiritual car, you've then got to hold on to this word of the gospel.

And that word, it says hold fast, it's actually a word, it's kind of like a policeman rugby tackling a thief, and getting him on the ground and not letting go. That's what it is.

That's what you've got to be like with God's word, he says. You've got to be tenaciously clinging to the gospel. And because I used to think the Christian life is a little bit like, do you know one of those trick candles?

[ 3 : 50 ] Did you ever get those when you were a kid? I used to have, I used to hate them. Because, you know, it'd be your birthday, you'd blow them out, and then two seconds later it'd come back to light again, and then you'd be like, ah. And then you'd have to blow it out again, and then two seconds later it would come back to life again.

Right? And you would just be so frustrated after trying this a number of times. But that's actually what the gospel is like. That though you may flicker, though sometimes you may fall, that if your

candle is that gospel candle, you're never going to go out.

You're actually going to shine brighter and brighter and brighter if the gospel is what you're clinging to. And cancer may come, temptation may come, relational difficulties may come, job layoffs may come, but if you're clinging tightly to this word, then you and this church will be like that candle which is never going to be put out by anything.

That's what Paul wants the Corinthians to get. That's why he's going to come on and say, this is what you guys in our church need to get. But the Corinthians, the reason Paul wants to say this is because the Corinthians had, teachers had come into the Corinthian church and were teaching stuff from the culture and they were saying, you can't really believe this gospel.

You can't really believe this stuff about being raised from the dead, can you? And they're beginning to doubt whether this is really true. And so we're going to look a little bit more about what Paul says we really need to be clinging to if we're going to burn that gospel candle that doesn't go out.

[ 5 : 24 ] And I want to focus just on kind of three themes from today's passage. One, Jesus the Messiah is risen. Two, your past is redeemed. Three, the future is secure.

Christ is risen. The past is redeemed. Your future is secure. Verse three. Let's have a look at it together. It says, Paul gives a basic gospel presentation.

It's what I like to call CDR News. CDR News. If someone says to you, what's the gospel? Tell them it's CDR News. Okay? It's Christ.

Do you see that word Christ? Christ, that's not his surname. That's a title. Okay? That's a title for Jesus. It's a title which means the Messiah, the promised king who is going to come that the whole of the Old Testament was looking forward to.

And it's saying, Jesus, the promised king, has come. That's the C. Come. And he's died for our sins. That's a D. He's died for our sins.

[ 6 : 36 ] The punishment that we deserved was on him. He's died for our sins. Buried deep in the ground with Jesus. He was dead. Our sins are dead and buried. He died our death and he rose.

That's the R. He rose to resurrect us. He rose to restore the world. That's the gospel. I don't need to say anything more. But that's completely nuts.

Have you thought about it? That is a crazy message. Go into your office and say, last week my pastor was raised from the dead. And go and see how people respond to you.

Or if you go down into Lang Kui Fong, I don't know how many conversations you're going to have with people saying, hey, my friend got raised from the dead last week. It's not going to happen. It's not normal conversation.

And back then, it wasn't normal conversation either. It's not the kind of thing human beings do, rise from the dead. And as you read the gospels, you find that the disciples are just as surprised as anybody about this idea, this CDR news that Jesus had risen from the dead.

[ 7 : 44 ] You see, they didn't get Jesus at all. Just when you think, okay, Peter says, Jesus, you're the Messiah. Then he says, you're not going to die. And Jesus has to rebuke him. When Jesus is arrested, they all run away.

Anyway, when someone says, do you follow Jesus? Peter denies him. And they're so scared after Jesus' death that they lock themselves in a room, hiding, hoping that nobody finds them.

Why? Because these disciples, at the same time, I don't know if you know, but there are actually quite a number of Messiah figures who were going around Judea.

In the period of about 100, 150 years, there's five to 10 other figures who claim to be the Messiah coming into Judea at this time. In Acts, one of them is mentioned, Judas of Galilee.

And do you know what happened to those Messiahs? They all got killed by the Romans. And do you know what happened to their followers? Well, if the Romans didn't get after them, then they kind of slunk away and went off to retirement somewhere in the countryside because they didn't want to get known because the Romans were not really particularly pleasant people at times.

[ 8 : 52 ] So it's not surprising that the disciples are very scared after Jesus' death because they knew what might happen. So then why would a bunch of scared followers of a failed, dead Messiah figure suddenly be transformed to be so bold that they would go throughout the whole of the Roman Empire willing to risk their lives proclaiming that the Messiah had risen from the grave?

Why would a bunch of people be willing, who were doubting, who were clueless in so many ways, be willing to put their lives on the line and be martyred for Jesus' sake?

What caused them to start churches across the whole of the Roman Empire which was so radically sacrificial and transformative in that culture that even one pagan emperor, the Emperor Julian, writes to his high priest, pagan high priest, saying, listen guys, we've got to do something about these Christians because do you know what?

They love people so much better than we do. And he even writes and says, they look after the poor. They look after their own poor. They look after our poor. They do so much better than we do. We've got to do something because these Christians were making such an impact in the Roman world. Why? And historians throughout 2,000 years have been trying to put this together and say something happened. Different people have different explanations but the early Christians, and if you look in the book of Acts, the thing that they keep coming back to, the sermons that all the early church preachers, is Jesus has risen from the dead.

[10:37] Now, in our world, we have a slightly different view of things. In their world, you know, they believed in monsters and myths and magic and things, but we're very scientific in our day.

And science has shown us that fairies don't live at the bottom of our apartments. You know, mental illnesses are caused by chemicals, not demons. Evolution proves that we don't need God.

Now, even though they lived in a more supernatural world, people didn't rise from the dead any more than they do now. That's why Thomas doesn't believe. That's why the disciples keep thinking that they see a ghost.

That's why the pagan writers at the time continually mock Christians for believing that Jesus could possibly have bodily raised from the dead.

If it's a story that was made up, well, why would you put women who in the culture had no credibility as a witness, as the main people who were witnesses for the resurrection?

[11:44] It totally undermines the story. Why would you do that? Unless it's true. And for those who thought that maybe they're all hallucinating, well, Paul in this passage tells you, okay, maybe one or two people you can think, you know, after death, they see a vision, but 500 people at the same time see Jesus.

This is not a hallucination. It's not a flashback. It's not, I saw my great, I kind of felt my great-granddad's presence in the kitchen kind of thing. This, Paul is saying, is real.

It's real. And if it's real, then it's the defining moment in the whole of history for Christians. Because Buddha came and he spread his teaching throughout the world and he died.

Muhammad came and he claimed to have a message from God and he died. Genghis Khan defeated enemies, created the largest empire across the world and he died. Gandhi came and led to the largest peace movement in the whole of history and he died.

Steve Jobs created technology that went across the world and he died. Jesus the Messiah came without an army, without a degree, without a marketing strategy, and he died.

[13:01] But on the third day, he did something that no one else in the whole of human history has ever done. He defeated death itself.

And he rose from the dead. He's not just the king over a few enemies. But if he really rose from the dead, then he's the Lord over everything.

Because what's the ultimate enemy that no one else has defeated? It's death. If Jesus has defeated death, then he is Lord over everything and nothing can stop him.

He's the risen Lord. That means, if it's true, then he's Lord over Hong Kong. He's Lord over the stock market. He's Lord over the Chinese and U.S. governments.

He's Lord over your boss. He's Lord over your families. He's Lord over your lives. Jesus is Lord. Do you see why a small band of Christians in the early church were willing to go out and risk their entire lives sharing this message because they believed in their heart of hearts that their Lord was the one who had defeated death.

[14:22] He was the almighty King of kings and Lord of lords. And if he's in control of death, then what else have you got to lose? Now, why is that important?

In our society, we like things and we don't like things. Look up Facebook. We judge things by how we feel about them.

We get offended. We kind of pick and choose. We say we like this bit about love in the Bible. We don't like these things about maybe sex or money or those other things in the Bible.

The problem comes when you start dealing with facts. Facts are annoying because just think about it. If I say to you, you will die and you say to me, but I don't like that.

I'll say to you, it doesn't matter if you don't like it. It's a fact. You have to deal with it if it's a fact. I used to have a housemate who when we would argue over who should have vacuumed the floor, I would look at the roster on the side of our wall and I'd point out his name and I'd say, you were on there and he would say, stop confusing the issue with facts because he knew if you have facts, whether you like it or not, you have to deal with them.

[ 15 : 45 ] If you're a Christian or you're not a Christian, the issue isn't whether you like Christianity or you like bits or you don't like bits.

I mean, a lot of people say, yeah, I kind of like Jesus but I don't like the, I don't like the Old Testament bits and I don't like the, the kind of bits about sexual ethics there. I think that's wrong so I'm not going to trust in Jesus.

Well, if Jesus has risen from the dead, whether you like bits or not, that's what you've got to contend with before anything else.

That's the issue. It's not whether you like some in the Old Testament. You can deal with that afterwards. The key issue is, did Jesus rise from the dead or not? Because if he did, if he did, that means you and I have to reckon the whole of our lives and reassess whether Jesus is truly Lord of our lives and whether we're surrendered to him.

If he didn't, then Christianity is a fraud and we might all as well go away and just kind of watch daytime TV or something because it'd be a better idea. Because Paul didn't like Christianity.

[ 17 : 02 ] He was offended by it. In fact, he was so offended by it, he thought young children might be influenced by it and so he actually went out and started persecuting and killing Christians.

Now, you've got to be pretty offended by something to start doing that. You know, even Richard Dawkins and people don't do that. Okay? But Paul met Jesus face to face on the road to Damascus and then it was irrelevant whether he was offended by those things or not because he'd met the risen king and his only response was to surrender his life and trust him.

And Paul is saying to the Corinthians who haven't met Jesus face to face, he's saying, this message is trustworthy. Every one of us has a Lord.

It could be your job, it could be your status, it could be your family. Christians say that their Lord is the one who is the all-defeating conqueror over death.

He is risen, he is Jesus and he's our hope for resurrection. Jesus is risen. What does that mean?

Secondly, resurrection means your past is redeemed.

[ 18 : 15 ] Your past is redeemed. Verse 17, we'll jump a bit, verse 17 says, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins.

If there's no resurrection, you've still got to live with your past. We all have pasts. Some of us are proud of our pasts.

Some of us are ashamed of our pasts. Some of us are a little bit in between about our pasts. And Paul has a past. He says this, last of all, this is verse, verse 9, 8 and 9.

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But, by the grace of God, I am what I am. Towards the end of his life, in 1 Timothy 1, when he's coming to the end of his life, he's still saying the same thing.

[ 19 : 23 ] He says this, I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, an insolent opponent, but I received mercy, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst. That's what Paul says, I am the foremost sinner.

Some of us feel like we're too messed up, too broken, we've got too much wreckage from our pasts, from the poor choices we've made again and again in our lives. Some of us wonder whether Christ would really forgive us for some of the things that have happened.

But Paul says, if you want to have a badness competition, well, let's go then. He says, okay, I'll beat your hands down. You've got a porn addiction, I'm a murderer.

You've treated your colleagues badly, I persecuted and tortured God's own precious family. You've shouted at your kids, I've blasphemed and opposed the living God himself.

[ 20 : 30 ] That's my past, Paul says. But, and it's a big but, bigger than my but, but by the grace of God, I am what I am.

Paul says, I was one untimely born. This is a really strong word. It actually means an aborted fetus. That's what it means. He says, I was an aborted fetus.

He's saying, I was dead spiritually. I wasn't birthed like the other disciples who walked alongside Jesus. Yet, God, in his incredible mercy, came and met me.

He forgave me. He wiped away my past and he graced me by bringing me alive with his resurrection power. And he looks around at all the Corinthians and he says, and even all the other apostles and says, I have achieved more than anybody else in this room.

I've worked harder than anyone else, but it's only by the grace of a God whose resurrection power takes a desert of a heart and brings green shoots, brings blossom, brings springs of water where there was only dust and dirt and death before.

[ 21 : 44 ] And it's all to do with God's grace. What do you do with your past? Maybe your past is your sin from this morning.

Maybe it's from 20 years ago. I don't know. For some of us, our past is a bit like one of those mosquitoes at night. You know, it just kind of buzzes round and buzzes round and you try and swat it away with your hard work, with your achievements, with shopping, with drinking, and you try and drown out the noise in your head.

And for a while it goes quiet and you think everything's okay and then suddenly you hear that buzz again and it's back to haunt you. And the poor choices, the people we've hurt, the painful memories we have, some of it sticks to us.

But, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, Christ says, and this is amazing, your sin is buried with Christ six foot under.

It's wiped away, it's nailed in a coffin and it ain't ever coming back up. That's what Christ done. and Christ, death and resurrection for you is like, do you know one of those, those bands or one of those badges when you get to a conference or you go to like a music event or something and they give you that and, and you've got to pay first usually and, and you get in and some of those dodgy security guards are around looking after you, looking for you and then you just kind of hold up your band and they're like, okay, fine, you're good.

[ 23 : 34 ] That's what the resurrection is like and the death and resurrection, because what it is, when those thoughts come in, when Satan comes and accuses you of your past, you just hold up that band of Christ, death and resurrection and say, it is finished.

My past is dealt with. My past does not define me. Christ, death and resurrection define me. I'm forgiven. I'm cleansed. Christ has done it all. Just hold it up.

That's what those words for when I'm tempted, when Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see him there who made an end to all, to all, to all, to all my sin. That's the gospel and it's grace. But some of us may say, it's okay.

I put the past behind me by my hard work, my self-discipline, my determination. I am what I am. I can do it. I was actually a bit like this, I think, before.

[ 24 : 45 ] I'd never have said it that bluntly. But I kind of lived like that. I was self-reliant. I was kind of a little Donald Trump. You know, I was disciplined.

I was hardworking. And I would look down on those people who I thought, you know, they couldn't put their lives together. They were lazy. I didn't have time for them.

But God brought me to a place where he showed me that when you rely on your own strength, you'll lack compassion for people who aren't as strong and disciplined you. And he led me through a journey where he brought me down to a pit and I had a breakdown, a mental breakdown and depression for four years.

And in that pit, and it was because of my own pride, my own choices, in that pit, he began to show me the devastation that my own pride in thinking that I could do it by myself would cause.

But when I was in that pit, then God began to start using me. And suddenly, I began to see that it wasn't my past performance that meant God would use me.

[ 25 : 54 ] It was only because of unfathomable grace that he would come to me and he would say, I want to use you. And that fuel injected me to want to start following him and obeying him like I'd never done before.

It was like, you know, the former slave ship owner, John Newton, who met Christ and became one of the most influential people in the anti-slavery campaign.

And he wrote the words which you all know. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a self-reliant, sinful person like me.

A wretch like me. And that became real. And when that grace becomes real, it changes you. God doesn't just forgive your past.

He redeems your past. If you surrender to Christ's lordship, he takes the crap and the manure of your lives. He buries it deep into the ground.

[ 27 : 03 ] And from that, from the sewage of our lives, this garden grows. By the spirit of God bringing life in, you begin to blossom fruit and flowers which otherwise, only God could have done that.

And I've seen how God's done that in my life as he's changed my heart to be able to minister to some people only by his grace with more compassion than I ever would have done before. And I don't know what your past is. I don't know what your sins are. But God, I know this for sure. He wants to take all of those things and he can transform them if you surrender to him with resurrection power.

He takes the dead, he brings them to life. And there are people around who God wants to use through your own life and your own pasts who only you can minister to if you allow him to redeem those things.

That's what he wants to do. And at the end of it, you look at it and you say, it's only the grace of God. It's nothing to do with me. I cannot stand here because I'm clever. I stand here because the grace of God is amazing.

[ 28 : 18 ] So let me ask you, if someone was to look at your life, would they see your life is a testimony to resurrection power? Not that you're perfect, none of us are.

Does your life show the graciousness of God who takes what's dead and brings it alive? Or are you still trying to prove yourself with your work relying on yourself?

Are you trying to shake off your guilt by yourself? Christ is risen. Your past is redeemed. Thirdly, your future is secure. He says, verse 19, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you're still in your sins.

Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

There are a number of theories about what happens when you die. Some people believe that you just kind of go to nothingness, you become food for worms. Some people believe you come reincarnated in some way, come back into the world.

[ 29 : 33 ] Others believe you kind of meld in and mesh into the universe in some very vague kind of way. The problem with many of the theories that people have out there, it's all very impersonal and it's all quite scary.

Chinese culture is riddled with the fear of death. Just think about it. If there's a flat where there's been a suicide, who wants to go and live there? Think about the number four.

Think how many times people are trying to avoid areas with the number four. And just think about things like anti-aging creams. Why they sell so massively?

Because we're scared of getting older. We're scared of dying. Think about midlife crises. What is a midlife crisis? It's suddenly the awareness that I don't have very much longer left and what have I done with my life?

Right? You see, we are afraid of death. And even if you say you're not afraid of death, I think you're probably just living in denial.

[ 30 : 38 ] Or, you're young enough to think you're immortal. Okay? And time will soon tell you that you're not. But if you actually really think about it, death is actually very scary.

It is. It's very scary. Because we all, our deepest desire in life is to be loved and to have love. And yet, death is the great thief.

Because death, I mean, just think how people are afraid of someone coming in and robbing your flat. Right? Now, think about what death does.

Death robs you of what you love the most. It robs you of who you love the most. It mercilessly strips you of the things which are most precious to you.

And it's unquenchable. You can't stop it. And those of us who have lost loved ones, you know that pain of that emptiness. If there is no resurrection, Paul says, the only hope you have left is in this world.

[ 31 : 44 ] And if it's only in this world, then when death steals it from you, you're still left longing for love. It's an impersonal, loveless future.

And you've got to try and refill it. But the gospel says that if death steals everything from you, what awaits is not a cold, impersonal grave, but the very epitome of love.

It's a personal future with Jesus waiting for you at the gates of death. And he's the Lord over death. And he's the one who loves you more than anyone.

It's a personal future. Not only that, it's not just that your future is personal. But if your only hope is in this world, you can't get your life back.

And once it's gone, it's gone. Paul has been shipwrecked. Paul has been beaten. Paul has been thrown in prison. Paul has had numerous people mocking, insulting.

[ 32 : 47 ] I mean, his life has been a mess all because of the gospel. And he says, if there's no resurrection, basically he's wasted all his time.

His life is a waste of time. There's no second chances. Our society says, hope is only found in this world.

And so that means we're crippled by a fear of missing out now. You know, it's actually a word. It's now in the Oxford Dictionary, FOMO.

Fear of missing out. FOMO. Okay? You all need to know this. Okay? Why do we constantly check our phones for messages all the time like a drug addict?

FOMO. Why do we have to be at every single networking event, every party, FOMO? Why do you have to panic about all your kids' education?

[ 33 : 47 ] FOMO. Why do you have to complete that bucket list of all the countries you've got to visit before you die? FOMO. Can I hear that? What is it?

Oh, good. If we've taught you one word, you'll remember this one. Now, the singles here, I think this really affects singles today in our culture because I think many singles are terrified.

Firstly, we're scared to commit to a relationship because you're afraid that you'll miss out on your career. And then, once you've reached the plus 30 mark, you're scared that you're never going to get married.

And you'll be lonely for the rest of your life. And when you're 70, the only thing that will be looking after you is a bunch of cats. That's the fear that cripples so many people.

And some of you singles are tempted to compromise right now because you should either be getting married and you're not and you should be or you are choosing to date inappropriate people because FOMO drives you.

[ 34 : 58 ] But the resurrection says, listen, if you don't get it all now, you're not just going to get a bit of consolation in the afterlife, you know, a little bit of spiritual bliss like to make up for what you lost, which is what other religions will tell you.

The resurrection of Jesus who rose to resurrect us tells you you're going to get back more than you ever lost. Not consolation, but full restoration.

Tim Keller puts it like this. You don't just get your body back. You get the body you always wanted but never had. Doesn't that sound good? You don't just get your life back.

You get the life that you always wanted that you never had. And I have male and female friends in this church and in previous churches who have said, because I know the resurrection is real, and if Christ does not bring me an appropriate spiritual partner in my life, then I can trust in the risen Lord because I know in the resurrection I'll have a better husband or wife than I would ever have had here on earth.

Many of you married people will know what I'm talking about. That's a joke. But that husband will be Christ and he'll be waiting to take you and me and us up the aisle when we see him.

[ 36 : 36 ] You won't miss out on anything. That is what the resurrection of Jesus tells us. You are not going to miss out.

FOMO is not in the Christian vocabulary. The future is personal and secure. So what would your life look like if you really believed?

If you really believed? Not just up here, but if you really believed that Jesus was risen from the dead. What would this church look like if you really believed Jesus was risen from the dead?

I think it looked like a church that could be honest about their past like Paul was that no longer looked down on people who are struggling but has compassion and walks alongside others because we know there but for the grace of God that could be me and it's only by grace that I am what I am today.

So we could be honest and hopeful in our struggles. That's the kind of church he wants to make us. I think it also looked like a church that looks a little bit like the early church in Acts.

[ 37 : 56 ] Maybe the church that that pagan emperor Julian saw. It's a church that doesn't cling to its time, its money, its kids' tutorial classes, above everything else because as we see the needs of the people around us, we're not afraid that if I don't go on that holiday then I'm going to FOMO and miss out of everything else but we can spend it serving people around us sometimes or joining a community group because normally we're afraid that if I go then I'll miss out on opportunities to network at work but that wouldn't grip us so much because the gospel says Jesus is risen from the dead.

We will work hard with a new mission, with a new energy but not because it's based on us trying to prove ourselves but it's only because we know who our Lord is. He's taken us who are dead, who are in the dirt and he's lifted us, infused us with resurrection power and now sends us out to go out to a world which is crippled by FOMO, crippled by their past and it says that if this church is to be that candle which is burning brightly, this is the gospel which we carry to the world which we need to keep reminding each other of time and time again because we'll forget but the call is will you surrender your life right now, your time, your money, whatever's going on in your life to the risen Lord.

Will you trust him with your past that he's forgiven, wiped it out? Will you trust him with your future that he's got it as secure as any bank could ever have?

In fact, far more secure than that. Jesus is risen, your past is redeemed, the future is secure. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's spend a moment thinking about that question. What would my life look like if I really believed that Jesus has risen from the dead?

[ 40 : 20 ] I have found some with me.

I've been thinking about it especially today. Father, the gospel is amazing news.

Forgive me. Forgive us when we kind of know it in our heads, but actually in our lives. It's another galaxy away.

I pray that you would make this truth become so real in our lives, in my life, in the life of this church, that we would see you are the Lord.

You are the Lord. You're the one who we worry about so many things, and yet if you've got death covered, well, you've got everything else covered as well.

[ 41 : 43 ] Whatever's going on in our lives now, Lord, I pray for those who are struggling from their past. There's guilt. There's things which hold them. I pray that right now you would minister to them and tell them it's finished.

I've risen. Lord, I pray for those of us who are self-reliant, who think we can do it.

I pray that you would show us that we are dead without you, and yet when you come in and you break us and you bring us that new life, you send us out with a new compassion, with a new mission to love those around us.

Make us that kind of church. I pray for those of us who are worried, fearful about the future, that we would see you got the future.

We're so worried about so many things which may happen, and yet you know the future, and you're there in the future.

[ 43 : 07 ] Father, you're here with us now. Help us to trust you. In your name. Amen.