

Where Is Your Hope Found?

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[0:00] Easter. Yeah. You know, in an early church, they got together. It was one of the very first kind of creeds or sayings that they said with each other.

From the very first gathering after Easter, they would say something like this. I would like to welcome you to the celebration of the risen Lord. And everybody in church would say, he is risen indeed. Can we try that? So I'd like to welcome you to the celebration of the risen Lord. He is risen indeed. Okay, one more time. I'd like to welcome you to the celebration of the risen Lord. He is risen indeed. Amen. Yeah, I love this time of year. If you're visiting for the first time at a watermark, we want to welcome you.

We are about two and a half years old. We're a pretty new church here, growing and just going in community. We're on a journey together as we walk together with our amazing God. My name is Tobin Miller. I'm one of the pastors here. And I get the privilege of bringing to you God's Word today. You know, I love Easter, Christmas and Easter.

[1:04] Something about those times that just, they just allow you to talk about things that are religious and people don't feel weird and people ask questions. And it's just an amazing time, just even interviewing the kids, just to see the joy in their face and the ability to talk about Christ at five years old, six years old and sin.

And things I had no concept of until I was much, much older than they were. But I love this time that we can do those things. So on Thursday, I was shopping for some gifts.

I wanted to get a friend a really neat gift. And I went to this store. I don't know if you've ever been to it. It's called King and Country. It's in Pacific Place. So now Colin knows where this is.

And Granger, I think he's a life member there. But some of you guys know what it is. But ladies, what it is, is this guy's and kid's dream. It's this store in Pacific Place about the third floor up. And it's just full of model tanks and airplanes and soldiers and all different eras. You know, it goes all the way from the very beginning of Egyptians to Vietnam to Korea, all these in Germany and everything there.

[2:17] And there's just battle scenes set up there. And it's like, I mean, it's like any guy's fantasy if you ever played with soldiers. And so I was there looking around, buying a gift.

And as I walked in, this guy was at the table there. And the lady was behind the cash register watching him. And he had these tanks. And he was playing around. And he's a grown man, right? So he's on his lunch break. He's somewhere in Pacific Place. He works. And so he's on his lunch break. And there's like six guys in there all doing those type of things, right? And so I guess he's there.

And it's really cool. And the lady says, can you wait a minute? And I said, yeah, that's okay. I'm watching the battle right here. So I'm sitting there. And the guy's blowing up tanks and everything. And then so the lady says, well, what do you want? And I said, can I have a nativity scene? So you're in this store with soldiers and everything else. But they have this Roman period. And they have this nativity scene. I go, well, I'll take the nativity scene.

[3:19] And, you know, I feel kind of like a weird, a little sense, you know. And the guy looked at me and he goes, are you a Christian? And I'm like, well, how can you tell? And we're in this store with soldiers.

And I come in and go, do, do, do, do, do, do. Can I have the nativity scene? And so I get the nativity scene. And we start talking. And it's really interesting because this season just brings out things. And I don't even think I tell him that I'm a pastor. And in the conversation, I say to him, I said, his name is Joe. I said, Joe, I said, do you have faith? And he goes, well, I'm a Catholic.

And I said, that's great. And he goes, but we are very, very different in our beliefs. And I was like, okay. And I said, well, how? How are we different? And Joe looked at me and said, well, you guys, you're much stricter.

I'm like, what? Because, you know, my view of Catholicism is pretty rule heavy and oriented and things like that. And I said, you know, okay, okay, so we're stricter.

[4 : 19] But our goal is the same, right? Our goal is to get to God. And today or this weekend is Easter. And we all celebrate that, right? And he goes, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's true. We have the same goal.

And so I just, for some reason, I said, are you going to be in heaven? And he said, no. I'm like, he goes, yeah, I don't, you know, I just don't know if it's all true.

And if it's all true, I'm sure that I have not been good enough. And I'm like, what do you mean? He goes, well, I drink occasionally and I do things.

And I'm like, I drink occasionally and I do things too. And he looked at me, you know, and he just kind of sat there. And I just, I felt so heavy hearted with this guy.

And I talked and I talked and I talked about the meaning of Easter and Christmas and Christ. And I said, God bless you. And I walked out the door. And as I walked out the door, Joe said to me, you know, I'm glad that it works for you.

[5 : 32] And I've been thinking about that for like three days. I mean, have you ever had somebody say that to you?

I mean, it's kind of like the get out of jail free card. Whenever you're talking about life and meaning of life and philosophy and religion, ultimately they say, well, this works for me and I like it.

And if that works for you, that's good. And you like it. And it's just important that it just works for you. And it's almost like if we're, what they're saying is that we validate faith and we validate thought solely if it works for us.

If it makes you feel good, then it's good. If it makes you feel happy, then it's happy. If it gives you hope, then that's a great thing. I mean, it has to be true or valid if it gives you hope or if it makes you feel happy.

I don't know where you are today in your journey here. Maybe some of you are struggling with, is it true? Maybe some of you are struggling with, if it is true, I just don't know if I can be good enough.

[6 : 46] And maybe some of you are struggling with, if it's true and I can be good enough, I don't know if it really will work for me. And what I want to do very briefly today is run through, I think, this passage of Easter, which is an amazing passage.

It's a passage that we always go to. And there's three things in this passage that we're going to touch on very briefly. What I see about hope and what I see about Easter and what I see about resurrection.

And what this passage, I think, says and what I want to talk about is it's going to say that hope is always found in truth. Hope is always found in grace.

And hope will always work for you. Hope is found in truth. Hope is found by grace. And hope will always work for you.

So the first thing in this passage I think of as I look at it, it says hope is found in truth. What we're saying today is that the resurrection is true. That Easter is true.

[7 : 55] William F. Buckley, a very famous writer, speaker, if you've ever heard of him, he talks with a very proper accent. He uses words that most people don't even know. Some people say that he's probably the most influential thinker in America in the last 50 years, especially conservative thinker.

And this is what he said when he was thinking about Easter, which I find very, very interesting because I don't know where he was at his faith. I know that later he became practicing a Roman Catholic. And he said this.

He said, The uniqueness of the scandal of the Christian faith, the uniqueness of the scandal of the Christian religion, rest on the idea that its teaching and its revelation happens in historical events. Christianity is not just a code for living or a philosophy of religion. It is rooted in real events in history. To some people, this is scandalous.

You like to use that word scandalous. To some people, this is scandalous because it means that the truth of Christianity is inexplicably bound up with the truth of certain historical facts.

[9 : 02] And if these facts should be disproved as false, Buckley says that Christianity has to also be false. He said this means, however, that what makes Christianity unique and unlike any other

religion or world philosophy in the world today, is that modern man has a means of actually verifying Christianity's truth by historical evidence.

He said, anything like any other thought, anything like any other religion, modern man today can verify Christianity's truth by historical evidence.

What he's saying is that if you can disprove the resurrection, if you can disprove today that we celebrate, you disprove all of Christianity. I mean, what he's saying is that if you can disprove any historical event in the Bible, because it's so intertwined, unlike any other book, if you can disprove any other historical event in the Bible, you can disprove Christianity.

I mean, think about that. All other religions and all other religious leaders, they've died. They've left this code of ethics, this idea of hope, and they've given it to us as their teachers. And they said, hey, if you follow it very well, if you do very well, if you show that you're worthy, if you show that you're not a bad person, if you show that you're a good person, and if your life changes a little, if you transform outwardly and inwardly to this ideal that your teacher has given you, if you do all these things, then you're good.

But Christianity says this, Christianity says it's based on a dead Savior who comes to life to prove that he's God and to make a way for us, unworthy and broken people, to get to God.

[11:01] About this time when I'm having conversations with people, often people would say something like this to me when we discussed the resurrection. They would say, you know, ancient people were so naive.

Ancient people were so primitive. Ancient people are so gullible. Ancient people are so stupid. They're pretty dumb. I mean, they would believe anything. But us today in Hong Kong, us modern men, we know what's going on.

We can show me. I can find out the truth. I can do it. But those guys back then, they just couldn't do it. They didn't have their act together. I don't know what's going on with them. C.S. Lewis said that when he was talking to somebody and they gave these thoughts to him, he said that's just kind of like chronological snobbery.

C.S. Lewis said that you think that just because you're modern, that we're more mature, we're more better, we're more capable. But he said sometimes we forget where all our thoughts came from. Sometimes we forget where all of our philosophies came from. Sometimes we forget where calculus and mathematics came from. They came from our ancient, stupid, naive brothers and sisters.

[12:19] And when you look at this passage, what I'm going to say to you today is that I think people in Jesus' day have the same problem in believing the resurrection as we do today.

They just could not do it. I mean, read the Bible. What does it say? Over and over and over, Jesus said, if you kill me, I'm going to rise in three days.

Tell Herod, destroy this body, I'm going to rise in three days. If you kill me, I'm going to rise in three days. I'm going to rise in three days. I'm going to rise in three days. But in the passage here, at the tomb, at three days, are any of the disciples there?

None of them. They couldn't believe it. I mean, they heard Jesus talking these things, but their primitive worldview could not hold the idea of a resurrection.

Just like we can today. I mean, none of them were there. You would think, you know, if I were the disciple, I would think at least I would take the most junior guy.

[13:23] Hey, you've been the disciple of the least longest. We would need you to go and sit at the tomb and just watch it and see if it's going to happen. Because we don't know what's going to happen, but earn your dues, go do it. But they didn't even do that, right?

I mean, no one was there. No one believed. No one thought it was possible for him to rise again. But then you see this change in them, and you have to ask yourself the question, what would it take for you to believe in the resurrection?

What would it take for you to believe in Easter is true? What would it take for you to believe that Christ raised from the dead on the third day? And the same is probably true for the people in Jesus' day.

Because they had the same thoughts, the same doubts, the same concerns, the same struggle. But what we see is they saw something so amazing, so incredible, so out of their world, so out of their grid, so out of their ability to even think about it, that they saw something that changed them so radically that they believed.

What was that? Well, the passage gives you just a couple things, and again, we're just going to look at it really quickly and talk about it. The first thing it says as we talk about hope, faith, and truth is in verse 1 is that the stone was rolled away.

[14:50] Now, I've been there to this tomb. The stone would have been massive. It was in tracks, and you could roll it, but it would have taken several people to do that. But what we don't know is that in the other Gospels, it says that there were a stamp put on it by the Roman pilot, which said, hey, there's a death penalty if you open this tomb.

There was a contingent of soldiers all around it protecting it, because even though the disciples didn't believe that Jesus was going to raise from the dead, the religious leaders said, hey, he said he was going to raise from the dead. We need to send some guys here to make sure that doesn't happen.

We need to send some guys here to check that out. So even though his followers didn't believe it, his enemies believed it. And the tomb was open, and I don't think it was to let Jesus out.

I think it was to let us in and to look at it and to verify it. The tomb was empty. I mean, all historians say that it was empty. They don't know how it got empty. They're arguing over that, but it was all empty.

I mean, the tomb wasn't empty. The minute the Christians started waving palms and freaking out and Jesus is alive, and all the Romans and the Jewish people had to do this, no, he's not here. Here's his tomb right there.

[15:54] Shut up. Go home. There it is right there. The seal's still on it. Stop. It's a false. He's a false prophet. He's not true. It's not worth following him.

The tomb was empty, where everybody would have been pointing about to that for the end of time. When you go to Israel with us, we're going to go in May, you go and you still see King David's tomb. It's there. He's inside of it. You see Abraham's tomb.

You see Sarah's tomb. You see Isaac's tomb. You see Jacob's tomb. You see all those tombs, and the bodies are still inside of them. But when you came to the tomb on that day, it was empty, and no one could point to a body.

Verse 5 and 6 says that the tomb was orderly. It wasn't chaos. It wasn't like grave robbers came in and tore things off, but it was very nicely orderly. When you buried a body in Jesus' day, this is what you did.

[16:51] You took linen, and you basically covered them with about 100 pounds of ointment and gook, like Lubriderm or something like that, or Vegemite. I don't know what it is. Something really gross, right? Something really gross.

And they covered them, and they took these really expensive linens, and they wrapped his feet and wrapped them all the way up to about right here. And then this upper part, because they still do this today, this upper part, they took really nice linens, and they kind of wrapped them in a circle and covered them up.

And so when they walk into the tomb, it's orderly, and what the disciples say in the Greek and the Aramaic is what they see is a cocoon. They see hardened cast of linen laying there, but the body's just passed out of it.

I mean, the linen's not everywhere. It's not, paste is everywhere. It's just, there's just a cocoon there. And everybody saw that. It'd be like if I just disappeared, and my clothes were left here, I'd be standing here for a second, and my clothes would be like this, and then I'd be gone, and my clothes would fall to the ground.

If I laid down, they would stay in the same place that they were when I disappeared. And that's what the Scripture says happened to Christ's body. That the linen was there, but the body was gone.

[18:12] The passage goes on and tells us there were angels there. There was angels there to testify to what Christ had done. They spoke the truth. When you look at Jesus' life, there's always angels present whenever there's a big event.

There's only one event where there weren't angels present, and that's at the crucifixion. Every other event, you see angels everywhere. They're talking. But at the crucifixion, they're not there, but he says, if I called my father, he would let loose five legions of angels with swords drawn right now. But he didn't do that. And so the angels testified to the truth. The Bible goes on, and it says that over the next 40 days, Jesus walked with people, he talked with people, he ate with people, he taught people, he allowed people to touch his body so they could see the nails.

All these things Jesus did for the next 40 days, and the Bible says hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people saw this, and when they saw it, they believed. There's two other things that make me think this is true.

Bear with me. The first thing is this, and I know I'm going to get in trouble, but a woman is the first witness. A woman.

[19 : 31] Now, you don't understand it, but in Jesus' day, women, every day the rabbis wake up and say, Dear Lord, thank you for not making me a Gentile, and thank you for not making me a woman. So women had a very, very small place in Jesus' day.

I mean, when he had women traveling with him in his band, that was amazing. That was the first time that ever happened. But the fact that Mary, she's not just a woman. She's demon-possessed. She was a crazy woman. She's a crazy woman who Christ healed, and she's been following him, and she's the first witness to the resurrection.

She's given the truth that Jesus is alive. Now, if I were going to make up a story in Jesus' day, I would never do that. That would be a total fail.

It would never work. No one would ever, ever, ever believe it. If I were going to make up a story that everyone, I wanted them to believe what happened, I would have said Jesus rose from the grave.

[20 : 35] He went to see the leaders in the Jewish synagogue who testified of his truth. He went to see Pilate and said, Shame on you for allowing them to do this. He went to see all the bad people, and then he went to see his disciples.

Now, if you'd written the story like that, everybody in Jesus' day would have said, Wow, that's true. The only reason the authors would write it like this is if everybody knew it was true.

I mean, if I wrote it and said, Well, then Jesus went to see Pilate, and Pilate was the first testimony to that, people would look at you and go, That's not true. Everybody knows the first person you saw was Mary.

Everybody knows that. How come you're plagiarized? What are you doing here? The fact that Mary is the first witness and given this opportunity to share the news breaks all realms of theology, culture, and history.

It would never happen. You would never do it. But it happened. And you look at it, and you go, Wow, the only reason that would happen is because it must have been true. The next thing that sticks out to me is that the evidence that the people saw so changed their lives that they all went from cowards to martyrs.

[21 : 59] Do you realize that? I mean, not just the disciples. The only disciple who didn't die a martyr's death was John. He was exiled on this island, and so he died at old age. But everybody else got killed for their faith. They went from running away to they saw something so amazing and so incredible that they died for it, and hundreds of the people who actually saw Jesus died also.

Does that make sense? When I was growing up in America, there was this big event. It was called Watergate. It happened in 1972. The Republican Party broke into the Democratic National Convention Party headquarters.

They tried two times, and they failed. The third time, they went in, and they got arrested. They were going to bug and look for information within the Democratic Party. Initially, five guys were arrested, but then it expanded to many, many, many, many guys.

And this controversy involved the President of the United States. And if you read the books, the guys all got together and said, this has to be our story. This is what we have to say.

We got to protect the presidency. We can't let it fall. We can't do anything bad. This is our story. Within two weeks, the story was broken.

[23 : 19] And the guys could not keep the secret. And they knew that they were going to be pardoned. They knew that even if they were going to be arrested, Nixon would pardon them. They would never go to jail.

But they had something incredible, and they couldn't even keep the secret for two weeks. And here, all these disciples keep the secret until they die.

It has to be true. You know what I wish I had said when I walked out of Kingston country? I wish I had turned back to Joe and said, Joe, don't believe in Christianity just because it helps you.

Don't believe in Christianity just because it's irrelevant. Don't believe in Christianity just because it makes you feel good. Don't believe in Christianity just because it helps you live a better life. believe in Christianity because it's true.

And if it's true, then it will work. Then it will help you. Then it will give you hope. Then it will change everything perfectly and forever.

[24 : 35] We don't want you coming to church here and believing in Christianity and thinking all these things just because it helps you. But we want you to believe in Easter and the resurrection because it's true. Because it's true.

Because sometimes you're going to enter into a dark place and your life is going to fall apart. If you're like me. And in those dark times, there have been times where I could cling to nothing. but the truth that Jesus Christ has risen from the grave. And because he's done that, I can work through anything.

Because he's done that, I have ultimate hope. Because he's done that, everything will ultimately be okay. Don't come celebrate Christmas because it helps you.

Don't come celebrate Easter because it helps you. Celebrate Easter because it's true. Hope comes in truth. The next thing I want you to see is hope comes by grace.

[25 : 44] I've asked Henrika to come up, an ex-college student and now coming back to visit with us. And I wanted her to share just a little bit of her story. I got the privilege of baptizing Henrika last year.

Henrika's real name is like this long. Henrika Hadessa von, Gertschah von Kampen. Almost. It took me like five hours to try to memorize that because her mother was there and said, when you baptize her, you must say her name perfect.

So Henrika, thanks for joining us. And I just, you know, we can sit or stand or however you want to do, Obert style. But I thought maybe you could just share a little bit about your story and how you came here.

Hi, everyone. Okay, so I was raised in a Christian family and my dad was a pastor. And when I was young, I just went to church.

But when I became a teenager, I wasn't really willing to wake up in the morning. And yeah, I was just...

[26 : 55] No, no, no. I know, right? So and slowly, I wasn't really interested anymore. My parents got a divorce when I was 10 and I moved around a bit during that time.

And I think I was a little bit disappointed by church community at the time. So I just didn't really want to go to church anymore. And when I became older, like older in my teenage years, I just slipped away a bit more.

And I don't know, I think I came into this dark passage in my life, or at least I wasn't really making the best decisions for myself. And then I heard that my dad got sick and he was diagnosed with cancer.

And I don't know, I wasn't really at a good place, but then it forces you to really think about your life and think about what matters and why we are here. And so it kind of got me out of that situation. So I started doing an alpha course, which is basically an introduction course to Christianity. And I got the chance to ask a lot of questions, but it never really went into my heart yet.

[28 : 00] So my dad passed away when I was 20. And I think I was really sad. Yeah, I was grieving a lot. And because of my dad being a pastor, I found it really hard to go to church because my memories were so connected to church and everything that happened in my past.

So then I was just doing, I was going to university and just finishing up my studies. And I decided that I really wanted to go on an exchange. So I thought, let's go to Singapore.

But I didn't get in because of housing situations and everything. So my study advisor really said to me, okay, you should try again.

So I decided, what is the warmest place I could go in Asia? Hong Kong. At least we had a relationship like our university. So I went to Hong Kong.

But before that, I kind of get into Buddhism. It works, right? Yeah, I was thinking, you know, like, let's try everything out. And my friend was telling me, well, if you go to Hong Kong, you know, that's the place to be.

[29 : 08] So I wrote an email on the Facebook and they never replied me. You were emailed to who on Facebook? The Buddhist community.

Okay. And actually, I got a reply one year after. And I was like, oh, how am I going to say this? I went to a different direction.

No. So, well, I came here and then there was a Chinese New Year's boat trip organized by Mike and Katie.

And then there was another invasion. No, it was the, so I came into contact with Watermark and got to know a lot of people in this community. And it was actually one of the worship at the community center for university students that Katie was praying with me.

And I finally realized where my, why I was so heartbroken and that it was too hard for me to go to church because of all of these memories. And she prayed with me. And I think from that point on, like, like I really felt healed.

[30 : 11] Like, at least it started. And I could work through some of my own issues and my own things that I was struggling with. And I went to a retreat and ultimately got baptized by Tobin.

Went to the Philippines mission trip and here I am again. Wow, that's great. So can you say, on this journey that you were on, even when, like you said, when your dad got cancer, he had lung cancer and he never smoked and it happened really quickly, right?

And you were just talking about, okay, what am I doing with these things? And now looking back, what would you say are some of the things that God was showing you or teaching you? Or what were the things that you would think about?

Where did you cling to hope there? What did that look like? Well, the thing is, like looking back right now, I can really feel that God was with me during the most hard times in my life.

That I think that if I didn't have that realization at the time that I need to think about bigger things or like, if I wasn't thinking about like, what life looks like or why we're here on this earth or anything in that matter, I would have, I wouldn't have been at the place where I'm now.

[31 : 26] And I think that in my life, God really showed me that He always reached out to me, but sometimes I was just too stubborn. But He's always been there for me.

Like, seriously, in the most hard times when I didn't want to go out of bed or just didn't have that power anymore, it became true.

There's so much healing that just happened this past year that I almost can't understand myself when I wrap my head around it, but it did.

And I've, like seriously, if anyone would ask me one and a half year ago, you'd be here on stage now? No, that wasn't happening. But yeah, it did.

And I don't know. Like, it's not that my, that everything is all good right now at the moment or that, you know, like, oh, you know, I'm in a high cloud, but it's, I don't know.

[32 : 23] It's better. What would you say if there are people here who are in that dark, weird place right now where they find it hard to worship or come before the Lord or maybe for some of us who've gone through it and maybe we'll go through it again, what would that look like?

What advice would you give to them after what you've experienced so far? I understand if you're at a dark place, but just, I would say try to hold on because if, like, the story we hear at Easter, it brings so much hope and if you even try to grasp a little bit of that, like how that could look like in your life, even when you're down at your worst times, it can bring light.

It can bring you that space to really, you know, just go and see God and, you know, see what happens, you know, go on an adventure and see where it leads you.

So, Henrika is like a role model for, I'm always asking her questions about how her dad raised her as a pastor's daughter and so, and, yeah, so hopefully my kids won't hear all the wild parts of that, but it's, that's good.

Hey, can I pray with you? Okay, let's pray. Father, we thank you for Henrika, we thank you for what you've done in her life. We pray just for continued healing. I pray as she just thinks of this Easter day and your, your son risen from the grave that she knows and has hope that she will one day see her father again because he will be raised also and I pray for her as you continue to work in her life and she shows us what it means to cling to you and your goodness that we would learn those lessons also.

[34 : 11] So I pray for the future that you're taking to her on this next journey after the university. We know that you'll go before her and we are excited to see the story that you continue to write in her life. We pray these things in your son Jesus' name.

Amen. Thanks. Amen. Amen. One final thought and we'll close up.

Easter in the resurrection in the hope of Christ coming back to life to me is powerful because I look at Mary's life.

If you read the last seven verses of this chapter, Mary was a woman. She was disqualified from doing things in their culture.

She was looked down upon. She was from a town called Magdala. You go there and there's nothing there. It's been destroyed. There's nothing there. She's from a small little insignificant place.

[35 : 15] The Bible says that she was possessed by seven demons. What that really means is that she was perfectly possessed. possessed. That she was totally and perfectly and just completely messed up.

As messed up as you can be. And the passage says that Christ came into her life and he freed her from her demons.

and she continued to walk with him until that day on Calvary when she saw him crucified. And the passage says that for three days she wept uncontrollably.

She was in the darkest place of her life. Her life was out of control. She forgot all of God's words. She forgot all of God's promises.

She forgot everything. And her life was out of control. And on the most important day in the history of the universe she comes to a tomb and she's weeping.

[36 : 25] And she's looking for a body. And everybody asks her the same question. Why are you crying? This should be the most happy day in the history of the world.

Why are you crying? And in her deep despair and in her depression and in her angst she even blames Jesus. Do you see that passage there?

She says, hey, where did you take the body? Where did you put him? I mean, nothing was working in her life. Nothing was coming together. She forgot God's words.

She forgot God's promises. And she started to blame God. I don't know if you've ever done that. But I have. God, why aren't you working this way?

How come this happened? How come this isn't happening? Why aren't I married yet? Why aren't we having kids yet? Why is my job so terrible? Why is my wife so terrible? Why is my husband so terrible? Why is my boss so terrible? In the midst of the weirdness and the darkness in our lives, often we blame God just like Mary does.

[37 : 39] And the amazing thing to me about this passage is that Christ comes to her and he's very gentle. He's very compassionate. And he speaks words of truth to her. And he calls her her name in a very intimate way.

And the minute she does that, her eyes are opened up and she understands grace. She understands mercy. She understands love. She understands forgiveness. And then God does something very unusual.

He gives the most important message in the history of the world to someone who would be seen as one of the least important people in that culture.

And he says, I want you to go out and share this good news. The thing that sticks out to me in this passage is the message that she had to share isn't ultimately, isn't ultimately the good news.

What the good news is is her life. Her life, as people looked at her life and saw the change that God did in her life, the healing, the restoration, the grace, the forgiveness, the passage says, resurrection Sunday, Easter Sunday, Christ raising from the tomb is all about finding hope.

[39 : 09] Hope is truth and hope happens in grace. So Mary's message is our message.

We're not the fastest. We're not the swiftest. We're not the most connected. We're not together.

We're broken. And all of a sudden, Christ comes into our life. He saves us. He redeems us.

We're weak. We're outsiders. We're sinners. And the message here says, unless we can rejoice in Mary's story, unless we can be happy in the grace of God, we'll never experience the hope and power of a resurrection.

Unless we understand grace so deeply and so intimately and how God comes alongside of us, even though we make mistakes, we make mistakes, we make mistakes, and he keeps coming to us, he keeps coming to us, keeps coming to us. As Henrique says, sometimes we're just stubborn, we don't want to listen, and he keeps coming to us.

That's the message of Easter. Don't leave here and believe in Easter because it makes you feel good.

[40 : 25] You get good candy. It works. Everything's good. I'm better off when I believe and when I don't believe. But leave here believing in Easter because it's true and it changes us.

if we allow it. Let me pray for us. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for this message. We thank you for Mary. Yeah, her story will be read for all of eternity.

We look forward to the day that we see her in heaven and we get to hear more of your amazing story and work in her life. Lord, I realize even now there are people here who there are people here who are far away from you.

They're walking in darkness. Their hope is found in their skills, their intellect, their health, their money, their connections because they work.

But Lord, you know that one day they will enter into a stage of their life when those things will not work because they're not true. So I pray for them right now that they would see the truth of your son and they would see the truth of the resurrection and they would see the hope that it brings no matter where we go in life that we can continue to cling to that because it's true and it changes us.

[41 : 56] Father, I pray for the rest of us who are on this journey already as your children. And so often, I think like Mary, we just get overwhelmed in the world and things fall apart and relationships break and we get angry and we lose our job and we lose our children to different circumstances and we lose our spouses and we lose our health.

In the midst of the craziness, sometimes we often, we lose you. We don't cling to the truth of the resurrection. We don't cling to the hope that is there that no matter what happens, no matter how bad it gets, there will be a day when all things are made right, when justice prevails, when the weak are lifted and made strong and when the poor and the hungry are fed even though it doesn't look like that in our world today.

The resurrection brings us ultimate hope and truth that one day you will make all things right because you made them right already through your son and by raising him, you prove that he is God and now we can come to you through him.

So what I pray for the rest of us who sometimes forget this truth and sometimes we blame you, Father, I just ask for your forgiveness. I beg for your forgiveness and help us to repent and help us to be convicted of how good you are.

Father, we love you. We need you desperately. We pray all these things in your son Jesus' holy name. Amen.