

# The Risen King

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning, Watermark. Our scripture reading for today is from the book of Matthew, chapter 27 and 28. Starting in verse 62, we read, The next day, that is after the day of preparation, the chief priests and the parrises gathered before Pilate and said, Sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive.
- After three days I will rise. Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, He has risen from the dead, and the last fraud will be worse than the first.
- Pilate said to them, You have a guard of soldiers. Go. Make it secure as you can. So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.
- Now, after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.
- His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the woman, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.
- [ 1 : 3 0 ]     He is not here, for he has risen. And he said, Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.
- And behold, he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples.
- And behold, Jesus met them and said, Greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.
- Go and tell my brothers to go to the Galilee, and there they will see me. While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place.
- And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, Tell people his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.
- [ 2 : 3 6 ]     And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.
- This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Riza. Good morning, everybody. Great to see if you're new to Watermark.
- My name is Kevin. And great to have you with us this morning. Before we start, great to see so many guests and visitors. Welcome. Lovely to have you with us. Also great to see Andrew and Akasha with little Ezekiel back.

Ezekiel's two months old. And great to have you guys back, part of the family. And also great to have Sarah. Sarah was a Watermark many years ago, nine, ten years ago. Moved to Singapore and back visiting.

Great to have you with us today, Sarah. Let's pray as we consider this scripture together. Won't you join me as we pray together? Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, we celebrate in the fullest sense of the word, the wonder of Easter.

[ 3 : 47 ] And God, as we come to your word this morning, I pray that you will speak to us. Not just speak to our minds, but you will speak to our hearts. We pray, God, that you will take what is written in your word and you will write it in our hearts.

And God, you will give us fresh hope and fresh confidence and fresh conviction about who you are and for those of us that are in Christ, who we are in you. God, we pray that you will be with us in our midst in your wonderful and gracious name.

Amen. Many years ago, Professor Cyril Edwin Joad, who was once the head of philosophy and psychology at University of London, he was also a public figure, a broadcaster.

He was asked the question, of all the people in history, who would you most like to interview and what question would you like to ask them? And at this stage in his life, Joad had abandoned his Christian faith.

He considered himself an agnostic. And he answered the question, I would most like to meet Jesus Christ. And the question I would ask him is the most important question in all the world, did you or did you not rise from the dead?

[ 5 : 02 ] Well, Professor Joad is right when he says this is the most important question in all the world. Because upon the veracity or the truthfulness of Christianity's claim that Jesus Christ died and rose again, upon the truthfulness of that claim, as Jesus said would happen, as the Old Testament said would happen, Christianity stands or falls.

In fact, the Apostle Paul, one of the early leaders in the church and a guy who wrote much of the New Testament, said that if Jesus' resurrection is proved false, we, our Christians, are the most pitied of all people in the world because our faith is futile.

Our belief is delusional. Our hope is baseless. In fact, it is no hope at all. And that's what Matthew wants us to see in the passage that Reza read to us this morning.

Matthew wants those of us that consider ourselves followers of Jesus to live with conviction and certainty regarding the historical reality of Christ's death and resurrection.

Some of us may be here this morning. Maybe you've got doubts about whether the resurrection of Jesus really happened or whether it was something metaphorical, something that happened in people's hearts.

[ 6 : 28 ] Maybe some of us here consider ourselves Christians, but just the grind of life, the everyday difficulty of life, kind of makes us wonder, what's the relevance of it anyway?

I mean, why does it really matter? Maybe you've been a follower of Jesus, but as you've been reading and thinking, the narrative of our culture has put doubts in your mind.

Well, today, Matthew wants us to have greater conviction and certainty regarding the resurrection of Jesus. And so he does that in this passage by showing us two things.

Firstly, he wants to show us the extensive effort of the religious leaders. And secondly, he wants to show us the matchless power of God. So let's look at those two things in turn.

Firstly, the extensive effort of the religious leaders. If you've got your Bible or your bulletin open up in front of us, we're going to be looking at the scripture and diving into it. But our passage today that Reza read to us has three clear sections to it.

[ 7 : 28 ] It's broken down there in the bulletin for you. In the first section, verse 62 to 66, tells us about how the religious leaders, is their extensive efforts to avert or forestall or even stop the resurrection of Jesus happening.

And in the last section, in chapter 28, verses 11 to 15, we see the extensive effort of the religious leaders to discredit the resurrection once they know about it.

And so look at verse 62 with me. It says, The next day, that is the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and they said to him, Sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive, after three days I will rise.

Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure. Now immediately we should be struck by the urgency of the religious leaders to crush any idea that Jesus would rise from the dead.

Matthew tells us that the day after Jesus died, which is a Saturday, which is a Jewish Sabbath, the day of rest where no Jew should do any work or gather before anyone else, and especially on this day, which is the Passover Sabbath, the one day in the year where all the religious leaders should be either at home or gathering with God's people in the temple, these religious leaders are hustling and bustling, very busy with activity, gathering before Pilate, a non-Jew, as they make this attempt to cover over Jesus' resurrection.

[ 9 : 13 ] And they gather before Pilate and they ask that the tomb be securely sealed and guarded. John Stott calls this an astonishing breach of Sabbath law that no other incident in the Gospels show how clearly desperate the authorities were to eliminate Jesus.

You'll no doubt remember, if you're familiar with the Gospels, how often Jesus gets in trouble with these very religious leaders for breaking the Sabbath law because he's often healing somebody that's sick or raising somebody back to life.

Here these same religious leaders are breaking Sabbath law to make sure that Jesus stays well and truly dead. And notice what they call Pilate. Did you notice the first word?

Sir, they say. In Greek, the word is *kiria*. It's a word that honors somebody in authority. It's a word of submission. But it's a word that means Lord.

In fact, in Matthew's Gospel, it only ever refers to Jesus or God himself. And yet here, the religious leaders go to Pilate and call him Lord.

[ 10 : 23 ] Matthew wants us to see that the authorities are submitting themselves to Pilate the way believers are submitted, are meant to submit themselves to God alone. Now, in this passage, they come to Pilate and they say, we heard that that imposter had made some claims.

He was gonna rise after three days. Let's secure the tomb to make sure that it doesn't happen. And it's a bit hard to know what their motivation is. Are they concerned that the disciples are going to steal Jesus' body away and then make this claim?

That's what they say in verse 64. Or are they mainly concerned that Jesus might just do what he said he would do? I mean, it's hard to know.

Certainly, they've seen and heard of Jesus' powers, his miraculous healing of the sick, his curing of leprosy, his raising of Lazarus from the dead. He claimed more than six times in Matthew's gospel alone that he would die and rise again.

They know about these claims. They say so themselves. And on the other hand, where are the disciples? The disciples are nowhere to be seen at this point, right?

[ 11 : 31 ] In fact, we haven't heard from the disciples since Judas betrayed Jesus. Peter denied him. And the disciples all flee at his arrest. The disciples are long gone. And the greatest concern of the Pharisees here is not the disciples.

I think their concern is Jesus. That just maybe, Jesus really would do what he said he would do. And so look at how many times they used the word secure in the first few verses.

Verse 64. Lord, sir, they say, order the tomb to be made secure. Verse 65. Pilate said, you have a guard of soldiers. Go and make the tomb secure as you can.

So they went away making the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard. The irony is, Donald Hagner says, is that Jesus' opponents took his own words about his rising from the death more seriously than Jesus' own disciples did.

Well, whatever their motivating fears are, their fears are certainly motivating them. Because look at their ironic behavior. Verse 63. They say, they go to Pilate and what do they call Jesus?

[ 12 : 42 ] They call him an imposter. A deceiver. Somebody wants to hide the truth. Well, look at their behavior in verse 11. When the guards told the chief priests all that had taken place, they assembled the elders and took counsel.

They gave them sufficient sum of money. That's a lovely term. I'd love to know what that really means. Very ominous term, right? They gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and they said, tell the people his disciples came at night and stole them away while we were asleep.

And if it comes to the governor's years, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they say, listen, this imposter, this deceiver, he doesn't, this guy who lies to everyone, oh, wait, wait.

Let's just lie and keep the story covered up with a nice sum of money. And amazingly, the chief priests and the Pharisees are the first people in the history of the world to hear the good news of Easter.

Jesus is risen from the grave. And yet for them, it's the worst news ever. Their worst fears are realized. And yet worse than that, actually for them, I wonder if they realize that they contributed to the veracity of the fact that the tomb was empty.

[ 14 : 04 ] I mean, think about it. If they had not had a bunch of guards seal the tomb, watching over the tomb, if they'd left it as it was and then Jesus' body disappeared, it would have been far easier to them say, oh, well, I guess his disciples came in the middle of the night and stole his body away.

But by putting a bunch of armed guards there, sealing the tomb, doing everything they can to make sure that there's no ways anybody can steal the body, then when the body's not there, well, it's hard to say.

I guess his disciples came in the night, right? It's a little harder to say that with all the security measures they put in place. Daniel Doriani says, it's a delicious irony that by trying to cover up the resurrection, they only helped to strengthen the legitimacy of the empty tomb.

And what a great cover up it is, right? I mean, it's a great cover up. All this bribery and corruption worked pretty well to get Judas on their side. Remember, they lined Judas' pockets with 30 silver coins.

Well, here they try again. Look at verse 15. And so, they took the money, did as they were directed, and the story has been spread amongst the Jews to this day.

[ 15 : 19 ] Now, when Matthew says, to this day, he's obviously writing about his day and age, right? He's not writing necessarily for all time in history. This was the primary story in the first century, that the tomb was empty because Jesus' disciples came in the middle of the night and stole his body away and disposed of it.

And yet, when Matthew says that's the story that is told to this day, it has an elasticity to it, doesn't it? In the second and third century, this is the main story that people told why Jesus' tomb was found empty.

We know in the second century that many Christians were still encountering the story and writing to oppose it. But even in our day and age, this is one of the stories we hear, right?

This is one of the reasons given for the empty tomb, that the disciples came and stole it away. And yet, this story, like so many others, fails to answer the key questions of the narrative.

For example, how could the gods possibly know who stole the body if they were fast asleep? I mean, generally, generally, eyewitnesses that are asleep and don't see the incident aren't very good witnesses.

[ 16 : 37 ] Furthermore, don't you think that at least one of these trained gods who knew that the penalty for falling asleep on duty was death? Don't you think one of them would have woken up at the sound of this massive stone being rolled away or the earthquake shaking?

How is it that they just had the best night's sleep of their entire life? All ten of them, right? And furthermore, if Jesus died and was buried, why hasn't anybody in 2,000 years produced any evidence of where their corpse lay, bones lie, his dead body?

The historian Craig Blomberg says, no ancient writer, Jew, Greek, or Roman has ever identified any tomb in which Jesus' body remains.

Douglas O'Donnell asks a fascinating question. He says, how realistic is it to believe that these faithful Jews Jewish men and the women, if they indeed stole the body and lay it to rest somewhere, would violate half the Ten Commandments, would violate Jesus' own ethical teachings, and would violate their own consciences for a fraud, for a lie, if they knew it was all false?

If the disciples knew where Jesus' body was and simply dumped it, what would be the possible motive for dedicating their lives to proclaim this message? of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

[ 18 : 11 ] The motivation certainly wasn't money. Read the Acts of the Apostle. Money is not something they flourished in. The motivation certainly wasn't honor and prestige and reputation.

When you read Paul's letters, what you find is that all he got for proclaiming this message was shame, ridicule, persecution. In fact, the message cost Jesus and his disciples everything they had because they believed in it.

Reputation, friends, community, family, indeed their own lives. N.T. Wright says, it was three centuries before anybody gained anything except insults, danger, torture, and death for believing the resurrection.

Friends, people might sacrifice their lives for honor or some great reward. Seldom will people sacrifice their lives if they know that it's a fraud if it's all a lie.

And that begs the question, what turned these fearful, cowardly disciples that we read about in chapter 26 who run away at the prospect of Jesus' arrest, what turned them into bold and courageous men almost overnight?

[ 19 : 24 ] A few weeks later, they stand before the very authorities that crucified Jesus and these men say, you better not proclaim the resurrection of Jesus and they say, what are we to do?

To listen to God or to listen to you? And they go and they say, put us in jail if you will, we will not proclaim, stop proclaiming the message. What turned these cowardly men, these fearful women, into bold, courageous witnesses of Jesus?

Friends, some people say, well, that was back then, you know, they were ignorant, they were primitive people, they were superstitious people, but these days we are enlightened, we are scientific, people, except no Jew, no Gentile in the ancient world ever had the idea that someone would rise from the dead.

It was not part of any worldview, any culture, any religion of the time, that anybody would bodily rise from the dead in a physical body. N.T. Wright says, a great historian, everybody in the ancient world, just like everybody in the modern world, knows perfectly well that dead people don't get resurrected.

Friends, do you hear what Matthew is trying to show us here? Matthew is showing us the extent that the people in Jesus' day went to avert, to stop, to cover up, to discredit, everything they could to make sure that the message of Jesus' resurrection did not get out.

[ 20 : 53 ] Do you see the security measures, the hush money that's paid out, the stories, the angst as they take counsel together? Do you see the passion that they go to, to avert, to discredit the resurrection?

Do you sense their agony, their desperation using every means possible at their disposal to stop and put a lid on this message that Jesus died and rose again?

The religious leaders, Pilate, the Pharisees, the scribes, everyone goes to extreme measures, extensive measures to keep the lid on, to negate and avert Jesus' resurrection.

But that's of course not all Matthew wants us to see. He wants us to see and to know and to believe that despite all these efforts, the resurrection of Jesus really happened.

Matthew's point is not just that Jesus rose from the dead, but that it happened despite all the efforts of those involved, who tried everything they could to avoid it. And Matthew's point here is that God is Lord, not Pilate, and that not the politicians, not the religious leaders, that God is Lord and God did that which man could not do.

[ 22 : 14 ] And so look at verse 1 to 10 of Matthew 28. Here Matthew wants us to not only understand it, but to see it. And I say that because four times Matthew uses the word behold.

Look at verse 2. Behold, there was an earthquake. Verse 7. Behold, he is going before you. Verse 7 again. Behold, I have told you these things. Verse 9. Behold, Jesus met them and said, greetings.

The word behold means to see something. It's Matthew's way of saying, look here, look at the evidence, examine the evidence. He says in verse 6, the angels say, come and see the place where Jesus once lay.

What is it that Matthew wants us to see? Well, a couple of things. Firstly, he wants us to see what the witnesses saw. He wants us to see the witnesses.

Who are the first witnesses to Jesus' death and resurrection? It's the woman, right? It's Mary Magdalene and another lady called Mary, the two Marys.

[ 23 : 19 ] Many writers have observed that in the first century, women had low social status. They weren't considered credible witnesses in a court of law.

Women were of low social status, which meant that if you want to make up a story and you need some witnesses to back up your story, the last people in the world that you choose to back up your made up story would be women.

That's not because women are inferior, but in the first century, their witness wasn't considered very credible. And so why does Matthew, of all the people, if he makes up the story, why do all the gospel writers choose Mary 1 and Mary 2 as their first witnesses?

The answer is, the only explainable answer is because that must be what took place. That must be what happened. Pinchas Lapidde wrote a book called The Resurrection of Jesus from a Jewish perspective.

Listen to what he says. He says, if the narrative were made up, one would have avoided making women the crown witnesses in the resurrection, since they were considered in rabbinic Judaism, unable of giving valid testimony.

[ 24 : 36 ] The fact that the same woman wanted to anoint the dead Jesus right after his burial, as Jewish custom demanded, proves that basically none of his disciples, nor the woman themselves, expected the resurrection.

You see that? Matthew wants us to see that the resurrection of Jesus is not the fiction of man, it's not a made up story, it's the work of God. It's the work of God.

Secondly, he wants us to see the work of God himself. One of the things I found out this week that I'd never seen before, is that the angels don't open the tomb so that Jesus can get out.

I'd always imagined Jesus stuck behind the tomb, and the angels come and open up the seal, and Jesus then walks out. But actually, look what happens here. Matthew doesn't tell us that the angels open the tomb that Jesus might get out, but that the woman might get in, and see the tomb is already empty.

Right? The angel rolls back the stone, and the tomb is empty. Stone or no stone, God or no God, seal or no seal, Jesus is not in there.

[ 25 : 51 ] Jesus has already left. And what's the point? The point here is that the angels didn't set Jesus free. God raised Jesus from the dead. The point here is not that the earthquake set Jesus free, it's that God raised him from the dead.

And what's the point of the angel and the earthquake anyway? Well in Matthew's gospel, angels and earthquakes are always a sign that God is at work, a sign of God's agency. Remember how in chapter one, an angel appears to Mary, or actually to Joseph, and says, Joseph, your wife, your engaged wife, your betrothed wife, Mary, is with child.

This is something that God has done for her. And so what's Matthew's point here? That despite the gods, despite the seal tomb, despite the stone, despite the speculation and the effort to avert it, the tomb was made empty by God himself, by divine agency, not human activity.

It wasn't the work of the disciples that emptied the tomb. It wasn't the work of the angels that emptied the tomb. It wasn't the work of the earthquake that emptied the tomb. Friends, this is the work of God himself.

The angels played no part in the resurrection. The earthquake played no part in the resurrection. The resurrection was an activity of God himself.

[ 27 : 17 ] Matthew wants us to see the witnesses, to see the work in the hand of God. And finally, Matthew wants us to see the physical body of Jesus. There's two things in this passage that's been bothering me all week.

three times or twice in this chapter and once in a previous chapter, it says that Jesus rises from the dead and goes on to Galilee where he meets his disciples.

And I thought that's the strangest thing. Why does the Bible make that point? It says it here in verse 7. The angels say, do not be afraid. Go quickly tell his disciples he's risen and behold he is going before you into Galilee and you will see him there.

In verse 10, Jesus meets the women and he says, do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me. And in chapter 26, just two chapters before, Jesus says, after I'm raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

And I just thought that is the strangest like, I mean that's random. Why do we need to know that? Why does Matthew want to tell us that three times? Well it seems to me that this is a really important incident.

[ 28 : 31 ] When the Bible mentions something two or three times, it wants us to take note of it. What's the significance of this? I think what Matthew and what God wants to tell us is that Jesus' resurrection took place in real time and place with a real physical body that people could touch and see.

You see, these days we often hear people saying, well it doesn't matter whether Jesus rose or not. What matters is that he rises in your heart, right? And Matthew wants to say, no, no, no.

It actually matters that he rose in flesh and blood, that the disciples saw him and touched him, that they heard him with their own ears. Matthew's at pains to show us that that's not what happened, that Jesus didn't meet his disciples in some kind of parapsychological, extra sensory spiritual way.

He met them in the flesh, in time and space. The angels don't say, listen, the stone may be rolled away, but it doesn't matter, just take it on faith. One commentator says, the resurrection calls for renewal of our minds, not the removing of our brains, right?

The angels don't say, well, just look from inside your heart or look inside your soul or just see Jesus in the face of your sleeping baby. Or, you know, feel him in the coolness of the breeze on a spring evening.

[ 29 : 57 ] Or see Jesus, the risen Jesus in the rising sunset. No, no, they want us to feel, to sense the reality of the real Jesus. Look at verse 9.

It says, behold, Jesus met them and said, Josan, said, greetings, right? Hello, good morning. He came and he, and it says, they took hold of his feet and they worshipped him.

One commentator says, ghosts don't normally have feet. They took hold of his feet. They felt his hands. They heard his actual voice with their actual ears. The angel invites them to use their minds to make sense of what they see.

And friends, this is why Matthew writes this. This is why the other gospel writers write the biography of Jesus. They want us to see, to know that Jesus really died and he really rose again.

Do you remember the beginning of Luke's gospel? Luke writes this in chapter one, the beginning of his gospel. He says, in as much as many have undertaken to write a narrative of the things that were accomplished about Jesus, just as those others who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, spoke them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed these things closely for some time, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

[ 31 : 26 ] Friends, that's what the gospel writers want. That's what Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John want for us. That's what they want for Mary and for the disciples and for followers of Jesus. Friends, that's what Jesus wants for us today.

Certainty, conviction, assurance of faith, that Jesus of Nazareth really did die and he really did rise again. Jesus didn't just rise in their hearts, he didn't just rise in a dream or rise in the sunset, no, he rise in physical bodily form and he made himself known.

Jesus died and rose again. And so what should we do with this? What does this mean for us in our day and age? Well, let me leave us as we close with three things, three thoughts.

Firstly, what should we do with this? Believe it. Believe it. I hope you see what Matthew wants for us. The death of resurrection of Jesus despite all the forces of hell, all the schemes of man historically took place.



It happened in time and place. Believe it. And so friends, when Jesus comes to Thomas later on and he says, put your hands in my nail scarred hands. Feel my, the scar on my side.

- [ 32 : 42 ] He wants Thomas to believe it, to really know that it happened. James writes in his epistle, James is the brother of Jesus and he says, you believe that Jesus is God?

Well, that's good, but that's not enough because even the demons believe that Jesus is God and they are destined to hell. In other words, believing in our mind intellectually or just academically is not enough.

He wants us to know it with conviction and certainty, to bank our lives in it, to believe in the way that changes our lives. Let the truth of who I am and what happened on the cross and the empty tomb shape your life, says Jesus.

This is the heart of the good news. Without the empty tomb, there are words of simply empty words. Friends, do you believe it? That Jesus died and rose again?

That he's seated in heaven? He's alive and he rules and he reigns? Believe it. Secondly, live it. Live in the light of this resurrection.

- [ 33 : 44 ] What I mean by this is this. If you're a Christian, and I know not all of us would be Christians, but if you are a Christian today, live as exiles or pilgrims in this world.

In other words, the Bible says, and Jesus says again and again, if you're a Christian, this world is not your home. Your ultimate home is in heaven and live as pilgrims or exiles in this world.

We looked at it earlier in verse 10. Jesus says, go and tell my disciples that I am going ahead of them into Galilee. There you will see me. Go and meet me there.

Well, it reminds me of John chapter 14 where Jesus says, believe in God, believe in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. I am going ahead of you to prepare a way for you.

I will come again and take you to myself that you may be where I am also. Jesus again and again and again says that the life of a Christian is one who lives away from our home.

- [ 34 : 49 ] That this world is not our home. We are exiles and pilgrims here. We live in this world knowing that our resurrection glory is ultimate reality. And so that means that Christians are not those who put all their stock or their hope or their confidence in this world because our real world, our real home is coming.

In our call to worship this morning that Karen read for us, one of the greatest verses in the Bible, 1 Peter chapter 1 says this, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, according to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, to a hope that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you.

Friends, I want to ask you this morning, are you living with living hope? Is the living hope of the resurrection of Jesus true for your life and your heart? Are you living in light of that?

Friends, do you live with a hope, a concrete hope through COVID, through economic uncertainty? When your stock portfolio loses 30% in one year because of everything that's going on, do you live with hope?

- [ 36 : 09 ] A hope that is circumstance defying. A hope that is, that that goes through the ups and downs of life. A hope that nothing in this world can touch or dilute or take away from you.

Jesus says because he died and rose again, we get to live with living hope. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul says that because of Christ's death and resurrection, he gets to embrace suffering and hardship.

He says, just as Christ died and rose again, I will embrace his sufferings knowing that I will die and rise again. Friends, are you able to embrace hardship, suffering, knowing that the resurrection of Jesus means you will rise with him again?

Moreover, friends, are we worshippers? In verse 9, when Mary and the other Mary see Jesus, it says they fell down and they worshipped him.

In verse 17, when the disciples see Jesus, they fall down and they worship him. Friends, I want to ask you, is the quality of our worship based on how well the musicians play on a Sunday?

[ 37 : 17 ] Is it based on whether we like the songs or not? Sometimes I don't like the songs. I don't know if I'm allowed to admit that. But friends, even if the songs aren't great songs, even if the musicians are having a bad day, can we worship?

Can we worship? Because Jesus has died and risen again. Because he's alive and he reigns in heaven. And before Jesus, at the right hand of God the Father, all creation will bow down and say, worthy are you, the lamb that was slain, to receive honor and glory and power and authority.

Worthy are you to receive our worship because you died for our sins and you were raised for our justification. Friends, live in light of the resurrection. Live with living hope.

Live with certainty and conviction. Live with embracing suffering and hardship and persecution and even laying down your life. live as a worshiper of Jesus.

Live in light of the resurrection. And then finally, proclaim it. Proclaim the hope of the resurrection. We're going to look at it next week in our final sermon, sermon number 58 in the book of Matthew.

[ 38 : 33 ] Over five years, we're going to look at it. But look at briefly verse 6 of our passage here. The angels say to Mary and Mary 1 and Mary 2, come and see the place where Jesus lay.

Then go and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. Jesus sees them a few verses later and he says, do not be afraid. Go and tell my disciples to go to Galilee and there they will see me.

Friends, this city of Hong Kong is the greatest city in the world. It really is. If you're from outside of town, I know your city is the second best city.

This is the greatest city in the world. But one of the things about our city, it is starved for hope. It is desperate for hope. And our city of seven and a half million people longing for hope.

Friends, can we be agents of hope for our city? Our city is longing for circumstance defying hope. A hope that will carry us through the next storm.

[ 39 : 41 ] The next pandemic. The next economic downturn. The next tragedy. And those of us that are Christians live with living hope. Resurrection hope.

That come what may, we will die and we will rise again. And we will live in our home where there will be no more tears. No more suffering. No more agony. The world will pass away and all things will be made new.

And friends, our city is desperate for this hope. Can we proclaim it? Can we go into our universities and our schools and our city and our apartment blocks and tell of the hope and the wonder of Jesus?

Friends, if you're a Christian this morning, don't keep this message to yourself. Don't keep this to yourself. Do what Jesus tells you to do. Come and see where he died and he rose again.

But then go and tell our city the message of hope. Friends, in the latter part of his life, Cyril Edwin Joad came back to the faith that he once abandoned as an Oxford student.

[ 40 : 44 ] He came to see, as Matthew wants him to see, not the physical body of Jesus, but he came to see the testimony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John.

That they record the historical facts that Jesus died and rose again. He came to have certainty and conviction and confidence in the resurrection of Jesus.

That Jesus, the Son of God, died on Calvary for our sins and was raised for our justification. That we might live with him forevermore. Friends, do you believe it?

Do you live it? Are you able to proclaim it? Let's pray together. Jesus, this morning we hear the words of Matthew.

We don't just want to hear it, we want to see it. That Jesus, you really did die and you really did rise again. That God is the Apostle Paul says that if this is not true, our faith is a farce, our beliefs are delusional, our hope is baseless.

[ 41 : 47 ] But God, this morning we have confidence, we have conviction, we have certainty that this is not just a message to make us feel good, it's not just something to help us get through our lives, it is true, it is historical, it's accurate, it is real.

Jesus, I pray, won't you send us out this morning into the great city of Hong Kong and cause us, God, to live with hope and certainty and conviction. God, help us to see it, to know it, to believe it, and to live in light of it.

We pray this in your good and your gracious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.