

Easter: The Confidence and Message of the Resurrection

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[0 : 00] Morning, Church. Today's scripture reading is taken from the book of John, chapter 19 to 20, starting from verse 28.! Please follow along the bulletin, your Bible, or on the screen.

Verse 28.

Verse 28.

Verse 29.

Verse 29.

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Verse 29.

Verse 29. Verse 29. Verse 29. Verse 29. Verse 29. Verse 29.

[6 : 33] Verse 29. Verse 29. And so we're going to look at the end of John's gospel this morning. Briefly, I forgot to say, just a couple of people that are here that used to be at Watermark many years ago.

Jackie, I see, from Sydney. Jackie, great to have you here. And also Chris and Jen from the States. Great to have you guys. Old time Watermarkers, just meant to say hello and welcome back to Watermark.

Great to have you guys here. Okay, back to our passage. So we're looking at John, the eyewitness, the biographer of Jesus. What did he think? What did he say? What did he see?

What did he experience? In our passage today, we're going to see three very simple things. The surprise of the resurrection, the hope of the resurrection, and the message of the resurrection.

Okay, we'll spend the most time on the second one. But let's look firstly at the first one, the surprise of the resurrection. John's gospel is unique in that he records the extraordinary personalness and intimacy with which Jesus engages in his first disciples, his followers.

[7 : 41] In our passage today, John records three conversations or encounters he has with people following his resurrection. He firstly speaks with a lady, a lady called Mary Magdalene.

She was one of his followers. She had come from a very broken past, a very, very broken background. And Jesus had healed her and redeemed her and saved her and healed a lot of her life.

And Jesus has a conversation with her. Then we see Jesus' conversation with his disciples. And then finally, there's one disciple in particular who wasn't with the original. And we see Jesus' conversation with Thomas.

And one of the things that we meant to notice is the fact that none of these people that meet and encounter Jesus expected to do so. None of them woke up on their Sunday morning saying, Okay, well, it's the third day now.

Jesus said that he would rise. Let's go see if it happened. All of them are completely surprised by what they encounter. None of them went looking for him.

[8 : 42] None of them were anticipating encountering the risen, wrecked Jesus. Despite the fact that Jesus had told them he's going to die and rise again.

Despite the fact that the Old Testament scriptures had said this is what would happen to the Messiah. Neither Jesus follows his friends. None of them expected to encounter him in bodily form on that Easter Sunday.

Look at Mary's response when she finds the stone covering to the entrance of the tomb has been rolled away. And nobody's inside. Look at verse 2. She goes and she runs and she tells Peter.

She says, Peter, John, disciples, they've taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they've laid him. She says the same thing in verse 13. They've taken away my Lord. Now notice what she doesn't assume. Mary doesn't assume the tomb is empty. He must have risen. That's the last thing on her mind. It's not on her dashboard at all. [9 : 43] She's not expecting that to be even a possibility. In fact, she says the same thing in verse 15. Mary assumes that Jesus' body has been stolen and maybe dumped in a ditch or hidden somewhere.

She says, verse 15, she's speaking to Jesus, assumes that he's a gardener. She says, sir, if you have taken away my Lord, please tell me where you've laid him, that I may go and take him away and give him a decent burial.

She assumes that he's been removed from the tomb and hidden somewhere or dumped somewhere. And she wants to honor his body by giving him a decent burial. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is not what any of his followers expected.

And the same is true for the other disciples, right? Mary comes and tells the disciples what's happened. Peter and John, John doesn't name himself. He just calls himself the disciple that Jesus loved.

Okay, but he's talking about himself. Peter and John run to the tomb. They see it empty. The grave clothes are still intact, but there's no body. But look at what John writes about himself and Peter.

[10 : 50] Verse 9, he says, As yet they did not understand the scriptures that he must rise from the dead. So they went back to their homes. It's quite amazing. If I was writing a gospel about myself, I would say, you know, Nielsen and Oscar, they're a little slow.

They didn't understand, you know, but I understood. I knew. But John doesn't do that. John sees it fit to write into Holy Scripture, onto his gospel account, that the Holy Spirit has preserved for us for all time.

John confesses his own lack of expectation. He says, hey, we didn't expect it. We didn't understand the scriptures. Even though Jesus had told us the Bible had said it, it's not what we expected.

None of the disciples expected. And of course, they go and they tell the other disciples, but there's one disciple who's not there. Where's Thomas? Well, who knows? Maybe he needed some time out. Maybe he needed some space just to process everything that had happened.

But for whatever reason, he's not with the disciples. And so the other disciples come to him and say, Thomas, you missed out. Jesus appeared to us. We've seen him in a real bodily form.

[11 : 58] And Thomas, amazingly, says, verse 25, Unless I see his hands, the mark of his nails, and I place my finger in the mark of the nails, and I place my hand in his side, I will not believe.

Again, why didn't John just write and say, and the disciples all believed, and it all just lived happily ever after? John is at pains to tell us that this is what none of his closest friends, none of his followers were expecting or anticipating the resurrection.

And as much as Jesus had told them, they did not expect his physical resurrection. As N.T. Wright, the biblical historian, says, The first century people knew just as well as 21st century people that ordinarily dead people don't rise from the grave, right?

It's not like, oh, those first century people, they were so ignorant. But us modern people, we have discovered through scientific experimentation that dead people don't normally rise, right?

There was a group of people a few years ago that were having a seminar, and they brought in a nurse. And they said, tell me, nurse, you've worked in a hospital many years. Have you ever seen a dead person rise?

[13 : 08] He said, no. He said, see, dead people don't rise. It's proof, right? But friends, first century people knew that as well. Nobody was expecting this. So why is John telling us this?

John wants us to see Jesus' resurrection from the dead wasn't thought up by his followers. It wasn't on their agenda. It wasn't on their radar. But they came to believe it when they saw it.

They experienced it for themselves. And these eyewitness accounts are written so that those of us who weren't there can read their eyewitness testimony and come to believe it for ourselves.

We can have confidence. This isn't a myth. It's not an allegory, as Neil said. This isn't a spiritual metaphor. This is historic reality. The surprise of Jesus' resurrection shows this is reality.

This really happened. This is glorious, wonderful, joyful news. Okay. But why? What's the significance of it? Why is it glorious, wonderful, joyful news?

[14:11] Well, look at what the resurrection means for his followers and for us. Look at the hope of the resurrection. If you've got your Bible, look at verse 11 with me. Verse 11 to 15.

It says here, John writes in verse 11. Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. And as she wept, she stooped in to look into the tomb.

She saw two angels in white sitting there where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they've laid him.

Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, woman, why are you weeping? It's a strange question, isn't it?

To ask somebody that is grieving the loss of a loved one, why are you weeping? Imagine you go to a funeral next week, and you go to the widow of somebody who has been tragically and unjustly killed, and you say, sorry, why is it that you're crying?

[15:20] I mean, what an insensitive question, right? What a ridiculous question to ask. Everybody knows why Mary is crying. Here is a lady whose life was completely turned around by Jesus.

She met Jesus, and Jesus changed her and saved her and rescued her, and having turned her life around, now he's been falsely accused, unfairly condemned, horrifically crucified.

And now they've done something with his body, and she doesn't know what they've done to him. Of course she's crying. Of course she's distraught. Why the senseless question? Well, it's not really a question, is it?

Jesus is not asking her a question, he's making a statement. Jesus is telling Mary, and he's telling us, Mary, you have nothing to cry about.

Mary, you have nothing to weep about. Why? Because Jesus' resurrection has changed the way that we see and understand everything, including all the worst things in this world.

[16:23] Especially the way we see all that is wrong and broken with the world. I don't know if you've, I'm sure you have, watched a TV series or a movie, and you're kind of following the plot line, you're following the plot line, and then right at the end of maybe like the climactic episode, something happens that turns the whole plot line on its head.

You know what I mean? Right? So they're looking for the serial killer, the murderer, and they're kind of trying to find it. And right at the end, they show you something, and you realize, uh-oh, it's not, there's somebody who's implicated in this murder that none of us expected.

Right? Maybe it's the lead investigator, or it's the spouse of the person that died, or whoever it is. But, and they show this bit of evidence, and as you see it, the scene closes at the end of the episode.

Do you know what I mean? Right? It turns the whole plot line on its head. The story suddenly becomes like, that's not what I expected. This is very different to what I expected.

That's what happens with the resurrection. The disciples are going about life, and they're worried, and they're sad, and they're grieving, and something suddenly happens, and the entire plot line of the world gets turned on its head.

[17:41] Jesus is no longer dead. Jesus meets Mary and addresses her greatest area of pain and agony, and in effect, Jesus says to Mary, Mary, you have nothing to be sad about.

You have nothing to cry about. Why? Because Jesus' resurrection from the dead means, in the words of Sam from the Lord of the Rings, everything sad, everything broken, everything wrong, everything unjust is becoming untrue.

See, friends, in the Bible, death is the final word, the final statement in the long and unhappy story of this broken and heartbreaking world.

A world in which we have rebelled against our maker. A world in which we've gone our own way.

And in the end, the consequence of this is that evil and injustice and fear and pain and authoritarian regimes and mental health crises and physical illness and anxiety and sadness and loneliness and untimely death are all too prevalent.

And in the end of this long and unhappy story, the final word seems to be that joy is swallowed up by despair.

[19:05] And hope is swallowed up by sorrow. And confidence is swallowed up by fear. And ultimately, life is swallowed up by death.

Friends, it's why the most honest atheists of our time have to admit that in the end, there is no such thing as hope, as lasting meaning, lasting purpose, lasting joy.

Listen to how one noted philosopher, Quentin Smith, put it. Quentin Smith is a philosopher. This is what he writes. He says, the fact of the matter is that the most reasonable belief is that we have come from nothing, by nothing, and for nothing.

Our universe exists without cause and without explanation. It exists for absolutely no reason whatsoever. Friends, I think that in many ways we must admit that we have reason to empathize with what Quentin Smith has to say.

That when we look at the sorry story of the world, sometimes we have to ask ourselves the question, is there any purpose? Is there any meaning in all that is broken and wrong and conflicted with this world?

[20 : 21] Do we have any reason for hope and purpose and meaning? And into the middle of the story, the middle of the story of the world, the God of life breaks in and overcomes death, walks out of the grave, and changes the entire plot line of the universe and the story of the world.

Jesus' resurrection means that what David wrote thousands of years before in Psalm 30, where he says, Weeping may last for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

Jesus' resurrection means that David wasn't only doing wishful thinking, what he said was absolutely and genuinely true. Jesus' resurrection really does change the plot line of the world. And in the same way, look at Jesus' words to his disciples, right? Look at verse 19 with me. It says, On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, that's Sunday, by the way, that's the reason why we gather on Sundays, the first day of the week, Jesus rose on that day.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood amongst them and said to them, Peace be with you.

[21 : 33] Now, why does Jesus say, Peace be with you? Because there was no peace in their hearts. Why are they behind locked doors? Because they are terrified, they are afraid, that their lives are in danger.

What they've just seen the authorities do to Jesus, they're anticipating those authorities are going to do to them. They're going to come and arrest them, crucify them, kill them.

They are terrorized. Their hearts are petrified. And Jesus comes and stands in the middle of their anxiety, and their fear, and their terror, and he says, You have reason for peace.

Reason for hope. Reason for joy. Why? Because I am not dead. I am alive. Jesus' resurrection gives hope to the hopeless.

And the same is true for skeptical Thomas. Jesus comes to Thomas, who has all sorts of doubts and skepticism, and Jesus gives him reason for confidence, certainty, and courage.

[22 : 36] All he had previously was doubt, hesitation, and fear. And friends, throughout this chapter, one of the points that John wants us to see, is that Jesus moves towards every single person, and he speaks directly to the aspect of their life, that is impacted by this fallen world.

What theologians call our fallen condition. The aspect of the fall that's impacting their lives. And he turns it around. He speaks to Mary, who's beset by grief. And he says, you have no need to cry anymore.

He speaks to the disciples that are wracked with fear. And he says, peace be to you. He speaks to Thomas that's overcome with skepticism. And he says, let me help you overcome your doubts.

For every single encounter, Jesus puts his finger exactly on the issue that they're grappling with. And he says, let me give you hope and reason again. Friends, listen to the words of the song that we sang earlier.

I love the song that Alan led us in. Death was once my great opponent. Fear once had a hold on me. But the son who died to save us rose that we would be free indeed.

[23 : 49] Yes, he rose that we would be free indeed. Free from every plan of darkness. Free to live and free to love. Death is dead. Christ is risen.

It was finished upon the cross. As we often say at Watermark, to those who are weary and need of deep soul rest, to those who mourn and long for comfort, to those who feel worthless and wonder if God cares, to those who feel weak and need strength, to those who sin and need a savior, the resurrected risen Jesus comes to you and to me and to us and he speaks peace and forgiveness and rest to our failures and our weakness and our guilt and our shame, our tears and our doubts. The resurrection changes everything. Now, here's the question. Does that mean that Christians don't struggle with anything? That if you're a Christian, you believe in the resurrection, party time,

okay?

Life's just a walk in the park. Boss of the cross for all the time, right? You go to work tomorrow, your boss shouts at you and just dance through. Boss of the cross. Doesn't matter, right?

Life is easy. No, no, unfortunately doesn't mean that, right? One of the tensions that Christians live with is this dual reality. We live in a broken world, but we live with hope because this world is not our home.

[25 : 19] We live in the midst of conflict and agony and we ourselves are fallen, but we live with joy and resurrection that our life is in Christ. In the preceding chapters in John's gospel, before Jesus goes to cross, kind of the second half of John's gospel, Jesus gives what's called his final discourse.

He's sitting around the dinner table with his disciples and he's giving them his final teaching before he goes to cross. And one of the things he says again and again throughout the chapter is, he says, listen, life's not going to be easy.

If you're going to follow me, life's going to be hard. But on the other hand, do not fear. I am with you. In the end, you will come through and triumph. And so look at some of the scriptures that Jesus is. John chapter 16. He says, in this world, you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world. John 16 verse 16. A little while you will see me no longer.

You will weep and mourn and lament and the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. John 14. Jesus says, I leave you, not as orphans, I will come to you.

[26 : 31] Because I live, you also will live. So let your hearts not be troubled, neither let them be afraid. So John, Jesus constantly telling his disciples, there's this dual reality.

You live in a broken world, you live in agony, your bodies are going to get old and frail and sickness is going to be a reality. You're going to die, but take heart. This isn't the final story.

The story doesn't end when you die. You will be with me. And all these great promises that Jesus gives in his gospel are bracketed by two resurrection accounts.

John chapter 11, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Then he teaches his disciples about the hope of the gospel. And John chapter 20, Jesus himself is raised from the dead.

And Jesus makes these amazing promises to hold on to. Words of hope in the midst of a broken and fractured and fallen world. But why should we believe his promises? Why should we hold on to them?

[27 : 30] Why should we trust him? Because this life is not all that there is. Because all these promises are bracketed by resurrection hope.

That Jesus died and he rose again. And because of his resurrection, it means partially in this world, but certainly forever and ever, Jesus is reversing everything that is broken and wrong and sad and unjust and wicked in this world.

Friends, sorrow is now swallowed up by joy. And despair is going to be swallowed up by hope. And fear is swallowed up by peace. And death, death is swallowed up by life.

As Neil said earlier, because of the resurrection, there's new life. There's new hope. There's new joy. New power. A new purpose. Because Jesus has died, but he hasn't stayed dead.

He's risen again. And so let me give you two brief examples of what this looks like in our life. The first one is from the church history. You know, in two weeks' time, we are going to start reading the book of Acts and preaching through the book of Acts.

[28 : 42] I'm very excited for that. The book of Acts is an amazing book. But one of the things we see again and again, and Niels, I think, prayed about this or spoke about this earlier, one of the things we see in the book of Acts is these fragile, frail, timid, afraid disciples of Jesus who locked themselves behind closed doors suddenly discover this boldness and this courage and this confidence that comes out of nowhere.

Where does it come from? It comes from the fact that they've seen Jesus died and rose again. And in just, at one point in the book of Acts, it's just a few weeks after Jesus has risen, the disciples confront, or they come face to face with the very authorities that arrested Jesus and had him crucified.

And listen to how they respond to those threats. This is Acts chapter five. It says this. The disciples, it says this, verse 27. When the authorities had brought the disciples before them, they set them before the council.

And the high priest questioned them saying, we strictly charge you not to teach in Jesus' name. Yet here you are, you fill Jerusalem with your teaching. Now remember, these are the same authority that just a few weeks ago had killed Jesus.

These guys have real authority, right? But Peter and the apostles answered them, we will obey God rather than you. The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead, who you, suckers, killed by hanging him on the tree.

[30 : 15] And we are witnesses to these things. And so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him. So Peter looks these authorities in the eye and says, you killed him. You guys are in trouble.

Okay? And we've seen him raised from the dead. Verse 33. When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. Verse 40. But they just beat them and charged them not to speak in Jesus' name and they let them go.

Then the disciples left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. And every day in the temple and from house to house, they disobeyed the authorities and they did not cease teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Christ or the Christ is Jesus.

Friends, how is it that these men, who just a few weeks ago are cowering behind locked doors, afraid of the authorities, now have the boldness, the audacity to look them in the eye and say, you guys are in trouble.

We've seen Jesus raised and you're in deep trouble. And they defy their orders and at great risk to themselves, continue preaching and teaching of Jesus the Christ. Because the resurrection changed their lives.

[31 : 25] It gave hope where there was fear. It gave joy where there was sorrow. It gave confidence where there was anxiety. It gave life where there was death.

Here's a more modern example. 1967, there was a lady called Johnny Erickson. She was swimming in a creek with some friends.

She dived into a river. She didn't anticipate how shallow the river was. As she dives in, she breaks her neck and she's instantly paralyzed from the shoulders down.

17 year old girl, very active, horse riding, very, very active young lady. From 17 years old, she's paralyzed from the neck down. And she has two years of rehabilitation.

She experienced severe anger, depression, suicidal thoughts and doubts about her Christian faith. But having wrestled with God, she comes to trust Him and even love Him, despite what's happened to her.

[32 : 27] And so for the last 50 years, she's had to grapple with how does the resurrection impact not only her hope for eternity, but life as a quadriplegic in this world.

Listen to just one article she wrote. She says that she tells about a day she's having a bad day. She says, For the fourth time that day, I needed my assistant to help lift me out of my wheelchair and lie me down.

We had to readjust my corset once again. Shallow breathing, sweating, and skyrocketing blood pressure was signaling that something was wrong with my body. My assistant Francie wiped away my tears.

As she shifted my body, I stared at the ceiling. I was done with being paralyzed. I was tired of the never-ending day-to-day disability routines. I had my fill of it, and I mumbled to the ceiling, I want to quit.

Where do I go to resign from this stupid paralysis? Can't blame her, right? Physical affliction and emotional pain are part of my daily routine. But I've learned that self-pity can be a deadly trap.

[33 : 29] Christ's death and resurrection won us many amazing benefits. But one of the greatest benefits is their power in our daily lives now to know the power of Christ's resurrection, even as we participate in the sufferings and the hardships of this life.

So that afternoon, I whispered a prayer. Yes, Lord, I look forward to being made whole again and having a body that will never know pain in glory. But to be honest, what I really want is a new heart that doesn't want to give up or quit here and now.

She goes on to write that the resurrection of Jesus gives her hope in the midst of the brokenness of this world, even as she, day by day, has to grapple with the brokenness of her body and the pain and the emotional pain she struggles with.

So friends, what about you? I know that many of us here are facing immense challenges. Immense, immense challenges. Not just first world problems, real problems.

Friends, some of us, relationships are so stressful and heartbreaking, it's a day by day reality.

Friends, I know that for some of us, marriage is really hard and you feel like quitting.

[34 : 41] For some of us, our relationships with our kids or maybe our relationships with our parents is unbelievably difficult. Friends, for some of us, we are facing chronic, debilitating medical conditions.

Some of us have to live with deep, deep grief, deep loss, hopelessness. And friends, life in this world is unbelievably hard sometimes.

Suffering is real. And it's not unchristian to grapple with the grief and the hardship of suffering. It's not unchristian to be immensely sad at times, even angry.

But friends, Jesus' physical, bodily resurrection from the dead 2,000 years ago means that Quentin Smith is unreservedly wrong. We did not come from nothing, by nothing, for nothing.

This world is not hopeless and without reason. Jesus can look at each one of us in the eye in the midst of our suffering and our hardship and he can say, peace be with you. I am no longer dead.

[35 : 41] I am alive. Everything sad is coming untrue because I am making all things new again.

Friends, life is hard.

It's very hard. Suffering is real. But that suffering does not define us. It is not your identity. Jesus' resurrection is. The hope of the resurrection for suffering saints in this world.

Let me close with our last point and I'll try and make this quite quick. The surprise of the resurrection, the hope of the resurrection, the message of the resurrection.

Look at verse 21 and 23 with me. Jesus says to them again, peace be with you as the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. When he said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.

In John's gospel, one of the things Jesus tells his disciples again and again, those who hope and trust in him, put their faith in him, is that there's something distinctively different about them.

[36 : 48] They're not better, they're not Christians, they're not more righteous or more holy, they're not, you know, there's nothing better about them, but there is something distinctive. What's distinctive about them?

This world is not their home. Jesus says that this world is not your home, you are pilgrims or sojourners in this world, your home is in heaven and glory with me. They have died with Christ to things of this world, they've been raised with Christ, their home is now in heaven.

They are to see themselves as pilgrims or sojourners in this world. Isn't that what John says, Jesus says in John 15, he says, if you were of this world, the world would love you, but you are not of this world.

I've chosen you out of this world, therefore the world hates you. But of course, the death and the resurrection of Jesus makes this very real. Just as Jesus rose to new life, he says to his disciples, you too will raise to new life in me, with me.

And this means, the world is not our home. The things of this world don't define us. The objects of this world, our status, our position, that's not our identity. But friends, that's not true for all people.

[37 : 56] It's not true that all people will one day be in glorious God. It's only those who are forgiven, those who know him, those who trust in him. And so how should we live our lives now?

Those of us that have come to know Jesus, how should we live our lives? Well, Jesus says we've got two options. One option is just to knuckle down, close ranks, and live in a Christian little commune, away from the horrible things of this world, not being defiled, keep out all the bad things, and bad people, and we live in a little Christian commune, just ourselves, and we hold on, and try not to fall away, and then one day we'll be with Jesus.

We can live a kind of monastic life in this world, where everything is Christian, and you shop at a Christian shop, and you go to a Christian school, and you only work with Christian colleagues, and you only wear Christian clothes, and just live in this little Christian commune, and you hold on to one day, Jesus will come and get us.

Jesus says that's not what He wants. There's another way. And another way is to take the message of the gospel into our world, so that many, many more people can discover the hope of Jesus, and be changed, and be forgiven, and be redeemed, and be saved, and join us in glory for all eternity.

Look at what Jesus says in verse 21. As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you. Jesus was perfectly content in heaven, with the Father and the Spirit. He didn't need to come here, but because of His immense love for us, He left the community, or He left the comfort of heaven. [39 : 31] He didn't leave the community of the Trinity. He's always with the Trinity. He left the comfort of heaven, and put Himself out, and was sent to save and rescue us, that we might be saved.

And Jesus says now, as the Father has sent me, so now I send you. And if you go and proclaim forgiveness of sins to anyone, and they believe it, they are forgiven.

If you withhold forgiveness, if you keep it to yourself, they will not know. They will not be with us in glory. And so filled with the power of the Spirit, Jesus calls us to tell the wonder of Jesus, the necessity of cross, the problem of our rebellion against God, but the hope of resurrection.

To tell the horrific necessity of Easter Friday, and the beautiful hope of Resurrection Sunday. To tell our city and our world, that God so loved the world, that He sent His only Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

Friends, what is the great problem of our world? It's our rebellion against God. It's not politics or the economy. It's not tariffs. It's not the great problem of our world.

[40 : 41] The great problem of our world, is that our Maker, who made us to know Him, and love Him, and be in a relationship with Him, we've rebelled against Him, and said, we will do things our own way. And we've put ourselves in His place.

We've sat on the throne of the universe. The great hope of Christianity, is that Jesus went to the cross, and died in our place, that we can be forgiven of our sins. And He rose again, to prove that what He said about Himself, and to conquer the grave, is true.

And then Jesus sends out His disciples, full of the Spirit, to proclaim the message, to all that would hear. So friends, what about you? If you're a Christian, does your life reflect this?

Are you living in a little Christian commune? Don't do that. Go. Full of the Spirit. As the Father sent Jesus, so He sends us.

Friends, Jesus has died, and He has risen again. It's not what the disciples expected. It's not what they were looking for. But it's true. It's real. John saw it.

[41 : 43] He writes about it. He wants us to believe it. Why does He want us to believe it? Because the resurrection of Jesus, changes everything. It changes the narrative of your life. It changes the narrative of mine.

It changes the suffering, and the brokenness, and the heartache, and the evil, and the injustice of this world. And it tells us that we can endure, because there is hope, beyond this life, forever.

And then Jesus calls us, to go and take this message, this good news, to the ends of the earth, to the farthest corners of the world, that all may know Him, and believe in Him, and experience life in His name.

Let's pray together, as we come before Him, and thank Him for this. Let me pray for us quick.

Father God, as we thank You, for the hope of the resurrection.

Thank You for the good news of Jesus. Jesus, thank You, that we can pray to You, and You are alive in heaven. You hear us. You hear our prayers. And You can answer them, because You are not in the grave.

[42 : 41] Lord, we don't need to pray to a shrine. We don't need to pray to a temple. We don't need to pray to a monument. We can pray to the living, resurrected Jesus, the one who walked in our world, and died and rose again.

God, You are risen. This is great news indeed. Help us to live, in light of the hope of that. In Your great name I pray. Amen.